

WORK/FAMILY BALANCE FOR MEN IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

A Dissertation

by

SHAIENDRA MOHAN SINGH

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2011

Major Subject: Educational Human Resource Development

Work/Family Balance for Men in Student Affairs

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Larry Dooley
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ABSTRACT

Work/Family Balance for Men in Student Affairs. (May 2011)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Larry Dooley

This qualitative study will examine the concept of work/family demand specifically through the lens of male student affairs practitioners. Work family balance has been identified as a critical issue for the field of HRD impacting both individual and organizational performance. The profession of student affairs was chosen, due to its nature of requiring long hours and encouraging unhealthy practitioner behavior. A qualitative, case study approach was used. Seven men representing a wide variety of years of service, marital status, and university environments were selected and asked to share their impressions and experience with work/family balance within their profession. Clark's Work/Family Border theory was used to guide this study.

The emergent themes indicate that men create definitions for the boundaries between work and home based on their individual station in life including marital and parental status. The men face emotional consequences for their actions, and in essence learn their boundaries based on how they impact other people.

The findings of this study will assist HRD practitioners in the ability to create individualized means by which to help men achieve work/family balance and maintain mental and emotional health. This in turn will allow them to be as productive as they can be within their organizational setting. Furthermore, this dissertation will encourage HRD practitioners to consider the full context of the day to day stressors, from both work and home that impact an individuals' overall performance.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the two most important people in my life. First of all, to my wife, whose love, encouragement, and support paved the way for this entire process. Secondly to my newborn son, who has given me a brand new perspective on work/family balance. I love you both dearly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Larry Dooley who has been with me since the beginning of this Ph.D. journey. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Peck-Parrott, Dr. Wang, and Dr. Welch who have provided me guidance, direction and feedback to make this a quality academic document.

I would also like to extend a debt of gratitude to my parents. Both came to this country years ago and pursued PhDs in their respective fields, and it is a pleasure for me to be able to join the team of “Dr. Singhs” in our house. The path they set has paved the way for my own experience, and I don’t know that I’ll ever be able to articulate how much they mean to me.

I would also like to thank friends, colleagues, and family members for their constant encouragement and support through this process.

Lastly, to my wife. The word “Thank you” does not quite allow for the true depths of my love for you and your role in this process.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I of this dissertation will provide an overview and the significance of the study. Furthermore, this introduction will provide definitions of key terms, as well as limitations and delimitations of the study.

Intent of Study

Striking a balance between the workplace and family demands has been identified as a critical issue for the field of Human Resource Development (HRD) (Pitt-Catsouphe, Matz-Costa, MacDermid, 2007; Polach, 2003). An inability to effectively balance workplace/family demands can have a detrimental impact on individual and organizational performance (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

This study specifically examined the concept of work/family demands through the lens of male student affairs practitioners. Howard-Hamilton, Palmer, and Kicklighter (1996), indicate that student affairs professionals are responsible for co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences at colleges and universities. These positions started off with “Dean of Men” positions—individuals responsible for the non-academic welfare of university and college students. As universities and colleges became more complex, so did the positions, resulting in practitioners being challenged to maintain their own balance between work and home, while still also being responsible for the after hours welfare of the general study body.

This dissertation follows the style of *Human Resource Development Quarterly*.

The profession of student affairs has been categorized as a field marked by long hours and a lack of personal balance (Berwick 1992; Manning; 2001). Manning indicates that balancing the demands of workplace with those of family has been identified as a critical issue for student affairs practitioners. Manning further indicates that due to long, inflexible hours, student affairs as a profession is marked by characteristics including workaholism and exhaustion. Further, men are underrepresented both within the field of student affairs (Howard-Hamilton, Palmer, Johnson, and Kicklighter, 1998) and within current literature on work/family balance (Halrynjo, 2009). To that end, the intent of this study is to examine workplace family demands among male student affairs practitioners, specifically through the lens of Sue Campbell Clarks' (2000) work/family border theory. Two main research questions are used to guide this study:

- 1) How do men define and navigate through the boundaries between work and home?
- 2) What environmental or personal constructs impact the manner by which men make balance/boundary related decisions?

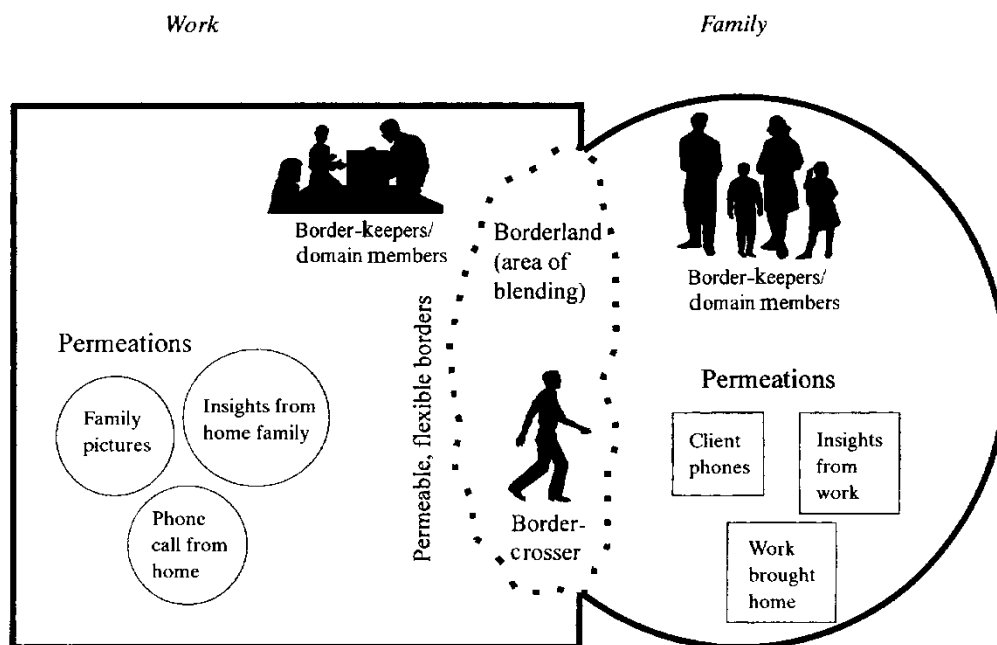
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework supporting this study is Sue Campbell Clark's (2000) work/family border theory. Clark posits that work and family are two different spheres that directly influence each other, and that individuals are "border crossers" who make routine transitions between the two areas. She

indicates that the contrast between work and home is slight for some, and greater for others, leading to a higher level of perceived transition.

Clark (2000) indicates that these transitions require individuals to tailor their focus, communication style, and overall interaction style to best suit the domain and role in which they are operating. Clark also focuses on the borders between the two domains, indicating that individuals can shape the borders between the two domains to build some level of desired balance. Figure 1 below illustrates the concept of boundary permeations as well as the different spheres of work and home.

Figure 1. Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000)



Furthermore, Clark (2000) moves away from defining balance simply as issue marked by time requirements, and focuses on the concept of “role conflict.” She indicates that the roles individuals play within the two domains of work and home can conflict, leading individuals to feel “imbalanced” in their work/family lives.

Work/family border theory can be directly applied to student affairs, because as Manning (2001) and Lowery (2004) have indicated, the profession is marked by long hours and necessitates a high level of practitioner flexibility. The long hours force practitioners to shift their schedules on a daily basis, leading to an inability to clearly define boundaries between home and work (Manning, 2001).

Methodology

Due to the nature of balance as being individually defined, I used qualitative methods for this research project, specifically I used a collective case study approach, allowing me to review the concept of work/family balance through the experiences of multiple people within a bounded system (Merriam, 1998). Cases were purposefully selected to represent the hierarchy of student affairs practitioners, specifically entry level, mid-level, and senior level administrators. A research assumption was that the varying levels and years of service within the hierarchy of student affairs provided a view into balance perceptions based on generational issues. Snowball, or network sampling (Merriam, 1998) was to recruit a wide variety of participants. Seven cases were selected for this study. Participants were interviewed either via phone or in person (dependent on location), with

interviews lasting roughly 45 to 90 minutes. An interview guide focusing on a variety of topics, including general biographical information and information regarding the nature of their respective jobs and their perceptions of balance was used. Furthermore, participants were asked to define their roles at home and work and to what level those roles conflict during different periods of activity. Additionally, job descriptions were analyzed to understand the individual's original function within the organization, and what expectations the individual had before taking the position.

Interview questions were developed based on Clark's (2000) Work Family Border Theory. Specifically, questions focused on three main areas:

- 1) Defining borders between home and work
- 2) Border conflicts: when subjects are feeling a level of role conflict between the two domains
- 3) Mitigating reasons behind perceptions of role conflict

Codes were generated from the information gathered using Boyatzis (1998)'s perspective on data-driven/inductive coding. Following the data analysis, the case studies were further compared using Yin's (2009) perspective on cross case study comparisons, allowing the cases to be reviewed collectively, in order to gain a robust and thorough perspective on the concept of balance.

Limitations

This study was limited to interactions with male student affairs professionals. Furthermore, the study was limited to seven participants, and

therefore was not able to fully represent a comprehensive perspective on the variety of views related to work/family balance.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to student affairs professionals in university settings, defined as being responsible for co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences at colleges and universities (Howard-Hamilton et al, 1996). While workplace balance can be categorized as an issue of concern for all university functional units, and employees regardless of sex (Berwick, 1992; Jo, 2008; Ward, 1995), this study focused solely on male student affairs practitioners.

Key Terms

This dissertation will use the terms “work/family demands” and “workplace/family balance” interchangeably. The guiding definition will come from Grzywacz and Carlson (2007), who define it as, “accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role related partners in the work and family domains” (p. 468).

More specifically this dissertation will focus on concepts of “spillover” and “role conflict” as defined by Keene and Quadagno (2004) and Clark (2000, 2001). Spillover is defined as “the reciprocal tension between the roles and obligations of being a parent or a spouse/partner on the one hand and an employee on the other” (Keene and Quadagno, 2004, p.3).

The guiding theory for this dissertation is Clark’s (2000) work/family border theory, which categorizes individuals as border crossers, constantly

navigating through transitions between multiple domains. According to Clark, the notion of balance encompasses role conflict and spillover. She defines it as:

Balance was defined as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict. Although the use of this measure is unique, this definition of balance is common. By examining the patterns of association between the five facets of balance, it is instructive to note that balance, as currently defined, may be elusive. Although work satisfaction, employee citizenship and family functioning do vary together, role conflict does not. In other words, it is likely that a person can be satisfied at both work and home and function well in each, but not without some role conflict. The synergistic relationship between work and home that balance implies may be, at most, a rare occurrence (p. 361-362).

This dissertation will use integrated definitions combining the above perspectives to assess the level to which student affairs professionals navigate through workplace family demands.

Significance of Study

This study promises to add to the literature in Human Resource Development by providing information on the relationship between work family demands and individual/organizational performance, specifically focusing on student affairs practitioners, and by examining workplace/family balance from a theoretical perspective. Little empirical research currently exists regarding balance from an HRD perspective, in spite of the fact that work-life balance has been

identified as a critical issue impacting the field for both HRD scholars and practitioners, impacting organizational performance and employee wellness (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; McDonald & Hite, 2005, 2008; Polach, 2003).

Furthermore, this study will add to the general literature related to workplace family balance by assessing student affairs from a theoretical perspective using Clark's (2000) "Work Family Border Theory" to a profession marked by "workaholism, exhaustion and a lack of balanced work and play lives" (Manning, 2001, p. 34).

Lastly, authors have indicated that there can be significant perceptual differences among men and women when it comes to work/family balance (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinowski, 1998; Halrynjo, 2009). The vast majority of current literature focuses on reviewing the female perspective on balance issues (Emslie & Hunt, 2009; Keene & Quadagno, 2004; Milkie, & Peltola, 1999). Little research currently exists regarding the male perspective of work/family balance, especially within the field of student affairs, which predominantly consists of women practitioners (Howard-Hamilton et al, 1996), setting up this paper to contribute new knowledge to both areas.

Dissertation Organization

This dissertation will be organized into 5 chapters. Chapter I provides an overview of the study, information regarding the theoretical foundations and the basic intent for this dissertation. Chapter II provides a literature review covering topics salient to the dissertation including Human Resource Development

perspectives on work/family balance, differences in perceptions between sex/generations, as well as overview information regarding work family balance as it relates to the field of student affairs. Methodology will be provided in Chapter III, including data sampling, collection and analysis. Chapter IV will provide a presentation of the findings, and Chapter V will conclude the dissertation with a discussion of the findings and implications for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review literature related to work/family demands and the theoretical framework associated with this study. The intent of this study is to further understand the concept of family demands from a Human Resource Development (HRD) perspective, specifically focusing on professionals in the field of Student Affairs. The guiding developmental theory is Sue Campbell Clark's (2000) work/family border theory.

Work/Family Balance: HRD Perspectives

The concept of work/family balance has been an issue for HRD practitioners for a number of years. Clark (2000) attributes this increase attention to the rise of an industrially based economy, resulting in individuals being pushed to work outside of their homes in larger organizational settings. This physical separation of work and home (as opposed to a more agrarian work philosophy), resulted in the notion of work and home being two distinct and different domains, that could conflict at times. In addition to economic changes, cultural changes also emerged resulting in work/family balance taking a more pronounced role in the decision making process for organizational leaders. Clark (2000) points to five key societal changes resulting in a higher level of inquiry into the relationship between the domains of work and home:

- a) Increase in divorce rates leading to a higher number of single parents
- b) Growing number of women in the labor force

- c) Increased focus on part time work
- d) Higher level of mobility for workers
- e) Changed worker expectations indicating greater interest in the quality of life outside of work
- f) Growing social value placed on fathers involvement in the home. (p. 749)

Furthermore, Howell, Carter, and Schied (2002) indicate that individuals have three main focuses in the workplace: task interest (job related responsibilities), extramural interests (commitments, values and beliefs), and career interests (career development related ideas). The authors indicate that there is a constant tension among these three notions, and individuals are charged with the process of balancing them in a way that provides personal and professional satisfaction. Polach (2003) asserts that while child rearing is a significant force in bringing the notion of work/family balance to light, the transition of new professionals into the workplace (and a complete 40 hour week) also plays a key role in the issue of balance being on the forefront of employers minds. Lastly, Krompf (1999) indicates a significant shift in individual values has taken place—one that directly impacts the way organizations function on a day to day basis:

There is a shift in focus from the assumption that family responsibilities must always accommodate a very demanding work life to the understanding that work and family responsibilities should be balanced. This shift grows out of the terrible pressure many people feel to spend long hours at work. As a result, research is moving from studying the impact of family

responsibilities on work productivity to examining the impact of work expectations on family life. (p. 66-67)

To that end, work family balance is emerging as a critical issue for HRD practitioners (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). The inability to constructively manage workplace and family demands can result in lower employee commitment, job satisfaction and overall higher organizational turnover (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). This critical issue has been exponentially growing over the past number of years, due to expectations for increased productivity and work hours (Polach, 2003). Schor (1992) asserts that much of this increased demand for additional work hours is driven by increased debt and consumerism, and therefore, may not improve for successive generations. Furthermore, organizational policies have shifted significantly in reaction to the emerging thought of bettering employee citizenship through work/family policies. According to Batt & Valcour (2003):

Formal work-family policies now encompass a wide range of programs including referral and financial resources for child and elder care, on-site child care, family leave and flexible scheduling and work arrangements (including telecommuting). Employers' use of work-family policies has grown significantly in recent year, and this represents a continuation in the expansion of average benefit packages which grew from 25 percent of total compensation in 1959 to over 42 percent in 1996. (p. 190)

This new workplace dynamic places an increased strain on both individuals and organizations to effectively plan for and deal with conflicts that can arise when

demands of home interfere with workplace responsibilities. Therefore, it is imperative for HRD scholars to understand the challenges associated with work/family balance and their implications for individual and organizational performance (Morris & Madsen, 2007). Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) indicate that in order to gain a comprehensive view of work family balance, we must move away from looking at it as an individual issue, and also study contextual and environmental factors as well. Furthermore, from a practical perspective, Brough & Driscoll (2010) indicate that external relationships should play a key role as well:

When designing work-life balance interventions it is important to incorporate not only worker and organization perspectives, but also the needs and views of workers' partners or spouses, who are significantly affected by patterns of work. This requires a broader focus in the design and implementation of work schedules to ensure their compatibility with family needs and values. (p. 292)

In addition to the environmental context, McDonald and Hite (2005) indicate that career development, specifically, has become individually, as opposed to organizationally driven. Therefore, emphasis is placed on what outcomes individuals are looking to gain through their careers. Personal wellness has supplanted financial compensation (still a major factor) in individual decision making (McDonald & Hite, 2005; Nissley & Hartigan, 2001), and individuals are looking for organizations that will not only support their desire to live a balanced lifestyle, but will also provide them with the opportunities to exercise instances of

individual judgment to make decisions that are both best for them and their families (Perrone, Wright, S.L. & Jackson, 2009) Furthermore, the changing nature of work, driven by globalization and technology, has created boundary-less work environments where individuals are accessible via technology 24 hours a day, leading to individuals having to become more flexible in the work structures, while still attempting to maintain a balance between home and work demands (Forret, Sullivan, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009; McDonald & Hite, 2005).

Organizationally, it is important for practitioners and scholars alike to understand the motivations individuals bring to the workplace. Kossek and Ozeki (1999) state that the field of HRD has typically focused on formal policies, and has given little to no attention to informal structures, such as family, or peer support. Additionally, Chalofsky and Krishna (2009) indicate that individuals are finding more value in their work when they can bring their full self to the workplace—meaning when individuals are able to come to work without concerns of tension between the different roles they play, their level of organizational commitment increases. Greenhouse, Collins, & Shaw (2003) conducted an empirical study on work/family balance for certified public accountants. They determined that a higher level of family commitment resulted in less work/family conflict:

For example, individuals who invested substantially more time and involvement in family than work experienced the least work-to-family conflict. In retrospect this is understandable because their restricted

engagement in work relative to family may have provided limited work pressures thereby precluding high levels of work-to-family conflict. (p. 526)

Scholarios and Marks (2003) reinforced this notion through their study of software workers in the United Kingdom. They determined a key determinant for organizational commitment was the level to which the organization supported the individual practitioner's non-work commitments. The less companies made individuals sacrifice their own personal needs and demands, the more attached the individuals became to the organization. The authors also found that an imbalance in commitment towards work (as opposed to family) resulted in a lower level of work/life satisfaction. Furthermore Anderson, Coffey, and Byerly (2002) indicate that there can be unintended consequences associated with individuals making decisions on balance related issues:

When employees request or make use of options that give them flexibility, they may be penalized in terms of perceptions that they are not serious about their careers. Thus individuals may perceive a need to sacrifice future career or advancement opportunities or risk other negative career outcomes in order to take advantage of scheduling options or alternative work place arrangements. (p. 793)

The positive impact of family centric work/family balance philosophies can lead to increased level of organizational commitment, and in turn high levels of organizational citizenship, performance, and overall retention (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Martins, Eddleston & Vega, 2002). In essence, the ability to focus on

family results in being a more productive organizational member. However, Chalofsky and Krishna indicate that the opposite is also true,

Employees today are defining success on their own terms, and some are opting out of the corporate rat race. Instead of living to work, people are working to live. They are tired of the inflexibility of standard work hours and the lack of concern for work-family balance and are leaving corporate positions in favor of more flexible career options. (p. 197)

HRD scholars and practitioners alike would be better served to look at workplace challenges from a holistic perspective, and understand that both organizational/individual performance and career development are impacted by the variety of roles and spheres of life individuals have to manage on a daily basis (Morris & Madsen, 2007). McDonald and Hite (2008) surveyed a variety of young employees regarding their work environment, and found a significant change in paradigm based on the reframing of individual employee motivations,

Some of the respondents [in the study] spoke specifically about careers that accommodate parental responsibilities; others without dependents were clear about making their careers only part of their lives. Although some may decry what they see as a diminishing of the traditional work ethic, HRD practitioners are in a pivotal position to challenge misconceptions about time spent at work equaling commitment, work quality, or output. (p. 99)

Grzwacz and Carlson (2007) put it best when they say, "This evidence indicates that, implicitly or explicitly, work-family balance is at the core of HRD's major

functions and that it may be a powerful leverage point for promoting individual and organizational effectiveness” (p. 456). McDonald and Hite (2008) echo this sentiment, and indicate “It is the responsibility of HRD to develop and implement evaluation methods that can assess and measure intangible elements like those identified in this study, career satisfaction, work-life balance and employability at an individual level” (p. 100). Pitt-Catsoupes, Matz-Costa and McDermid (2007) indicate that this strategy must not be focused on immediate visible employee concerns, rather focused on the causes of employee frustrations:

Employers often focus on the manifestations of work-family stress (particularly those that become visible at the workplace) and develop policies and programs in response. However there is a risk that they may not pay sufficient attention to the three sets of antecedent factors that can affect work-family stress: work and family demands, resources and strategies and tactics. We contend that there is a dynamic relationship between these antecedent factors, work-family stress, and the outcomes for business as well as for employees and their families. Workplace based policies, practices and programs that respond to an understanding of demands and resources as well as the strategies and tactics employees use may be more effective than those that focus on the manifestation of stress alone. (p. 540)

Polach (2003) reinforces this notion and indicates that organizations are fixated only on providing programs to assist professionals in their challenges with

work/family balance, as opposed to transitioning and transforming workplace philosophies to assist in the process.

This particular study will review this critical HRD related issue through the lens of student affairs organizations, a profession marked by long hours and workaholism (Manning, 2001). These concepts, combined with a lack high level of variability in day to day operations can result in high levels of work/family conflict. According to Batt & Valcour (2003):

Work-design characteristics were strong predictors of work-family conflict and the strongest predictors of employees' perceptions of control or ability to manage family demands. Coordination responsibilities, technology use and long hours were associated with significantly higher work-family conflict. (p. 203)

Furthermore, the high levels of turnover (Manning, 2001) in the field of student affairs create a significant amount of organizational stress, resulting in a lack of optimum performance. According to Chan, Shaffer, and Snape (2004), "High performance work practices need a reasonable degree of consistency over a sustained period of time before they can deliver good business results" (p. 22). Simply put, high levels of turnover create stressful work environments, resulting in a work environment that can be caustic and counterproductive.

To that end, the field of Student Affairs provides a unique and applicable opportunity to review the concept of work/family balance. Specifically, the impact

of organizational practices on individual practitioner choices will be reviewed to provide an illustrated view of work/family balance.

Area of Focus: Student Affairs

Overview of Field

The guiding definition for the field of student affairs used for this dissertation comes from Howard-Hamilton et al, (1996), who indicate that student affairs professionals are responsible for co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences at colleges and universities. According to Rhatigan (2000), the original function of on campus student affairs work emerged as a result of a variety of factors,

In retrospect, it is evident that several factors influenced the development of this new field of work , including the development of land-grant institutions and the rise of public colleges and universities; expanding enrollments and the accompanying increase in the heterogeneity of student populations. (p. 8).

As a result, the overall day to day management of colleges and universities became increasingly complex, resulting in the creation of “Dean of Men” positions (Rhatigan, 2000). These positions were responsible for the day to day development of students at universities for all matters outside of the classroom.

Over time, as universities became larger and more complex, these positions evolved into Dean of Students positions, however the intent of the positions till remained the same: responsibility for the day to day, non-academic welfare of the

general student body. The positions themselves evolved into offices, typically led by individuals with strong administrative abilities (Rhatigan, 2000). These positions were tasked with a wide variety of responsibilities. Eventually, these positions further developed into the Dean of Students role, typically selected for strong administrative abilities (Rhatigan, 2000). Barr (2000) also indicates that these positions required a significant amount of after-hours work in order to best serve the schedule of the general student body population.

The field of student affairs emerged as a true profession on college and university campuses in the mid-twentieth century (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Students were facing a number of societal and political pressures (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002), and university administrators sought out multidisciplinary views on how they could best support their students, and create a holistic learning environment to ensure student success (Hamrick Evans, Schuh, 2002)—thus the development of a new field of study known as student development. Furthermore, as campuses became more and more complex, the relationship between the university and the individual student followed suit. This relationship is marked by both legal and ethical standards of care, specifically governing the roles and responsibilities a university has to its students (Gehring, 2000).

The roles of student affairs practitioners range from working with student discipline issues, to residence life, to facilitating on campus student activities (Hossler, 1996). The nature of the work is highly interactional—professionals are charged to work daily with multiple constituents (Palmer, Murphy, Peck-Parrott, &

Steinke, 2001), dependent on the role and function they play on campus, among which are faculty, staff, students, student organizations, and local/state community based organizations (Woodard & Destinon, 2000).

Furthermore, institutional characteristics, such as size and affiliation can directly impact the way student affairs practitioners work on a day to day basis. The size of an institution dictates the number of students each practitioner interacts with on a daily basis. According to Barr (2000),

One of the more important characteristics is institutional size. This characteristic, perhaps more than any other, influences the role of student affairs. Smaller more intimate, institutions allow student affairs staff members to know students and interact with them on a daily basis. For example, at Cornell College in Iowa, the dean of students has an opportunity to know a greater proportion of students on a more informal level than can be achieved by the vice president for student affairs at the University of Michigan. (p. 29)

Barr states that the size of the institution can also dictate the amount of diffused responsibility student affairs practitioners can have—smaller institutions can result in individuals being responsible for a wide variety of departments, as opposed to practitioners at larger institutions being responsible for fewer, but larger, departments.

Furthermore, mission centric/private institutions can also set specific stipulations to govern the activities and actions of student affairs practitioners.

Culturally, these institutions have a different set of guidelines than state funded public institutions that limit, and provide specific standards by which decisions are made. According to Barr (2000),

The mission statement also provides specific guidance to student affairs professionals in developing policies and implementing new program initiatives. To illustrate, if an institution is church-controlled and committed to strongly held views regarding the behavior of students, development of policies that run contrary to the mission of the institution will not be supported. Thus social activities, health education programs, and residence hall rules and regulations must all be congruent with the mission of the institution. Or if an institution is founded to serve the community, policies and practices that restrict access of community members to the institution will not be tolerated. (p. 27)

The field has evolved into one defined by numerous boundaries, that clearly dictate how professionals should operate on a day to day basis. The following section will provide reasoning for choosing this field as a focus of my study.

Relation to Study

The study focused on the field of student affairs in higher education settings, specifically in regards to issues related to balance and family demands—and the resulting impact on individual and organizational performance. According to Manning (2001), the issue of striking a balance between personal and professional demands has long been an issue within the field of student affairs. Manning stated

that student affairs professionals are unique, in that they often enter into unhealthy relationships with their jobs. In other words the professionals enter a negative, “co-dependent” relationship with their position:

In these interactions, a person can lose track of his or her needs in the service of another. It is difficult to set limits when a codependent educator sees himself as the only person who can solve the problem, provide the answer, or complete the task. (Manning, 2001, p. 31)

The parameters and overall purpose/function of the profession can result in an overwhelming amount of work for individual practitioners. According to Howard-Hamilton, Palmer, Johnson & Kicklighter:

The personal and professional demands with their duties also vary widely. For example, some student affairs administrators are required to work essentially a regular eight-hour work day, while others are required to be available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Oftentimes, student affairs administrators embrace a “yes I can, yes I will” frame of mind and work ethic. This involves not delegating, becoming a mentor for all students and colleagues in need, not using the word “no” as often as they should, or feeling that a sense of accomplishment is synonymous with exhaustion and fatigue. (p. 81)

In essence, individuals feel they are the only source of answers for their responsibilities. As opposed to seeking out collaborative solutions to additional responsibilities, individuals feel it necessary to be the comprehensive solution to

every work related problem (Howell, Carter, & Schied, 2002). This feeling, combined with increased level of individual ambition (McDonald & Hite, 2008) in an environment marked by constant connection to work related responsibilities (Forret , et al., 2009), can result in an individual having an unhealthy relationship with their position marked by a constant pressure to perform and succeed.

Manning (2001) asserts that these codependent relationships lead to a lack of balance, and can also contribute significantly to practitioner mental and physical health deficiencies. This notion is not unique to student affairs, as reinforced by Major, Klein and Erhart (2002), who surveyed employees at a Fortune 500 company and determined:

As predicted, people worked longer hours when they had strong career identities, had too much to do in too little time on the job, perceived that their supervisors expected them to work extra hours as needed, had fewer responsibilities away from work and believed that they had relatively great financial needs. (p. 433)

The authors determined that long hours, as a result of the above pressures, resulted in increased levels of work/family conflict and psychological distress.

Consequently, these negative attributes can in turn lead to high levels of administrator turnover (Ward, 1995). According to Rosser & Javinar (2003), these high levels of turnover means that “units lose efficiency, consistency and quality in the delivery of services, as well as the investment made in the knowledge base of the institution or unit” (p. 825), which in turn result in amended job descriptions

and responsibilities across the division or department, thus impacting overall organizational productivity.

Several authors (Berwick, 1992; Palmer, Murphy, Peck-Parrott, & Steinke, 2001; Ward, 1995) have indicated a combination of increased work hours, role conflict (defined by times where individual roles are not clearly defined, or when roles conflict with other responsibilities both in and out of the workplace), can lead to higher levels of work related stress, ultimately resulting in a level of practitioner burnout. Specifically, Ward (1995) indicates these increased hours result in individuals feeling a sense of “dissonance” between their individual goals and the institutional goals. This level of dissonance leads to a lower level of job satisfaction, which Berwick (1992) indicated is the variable most closely associated with higher stress levels. Howard-Hamilton, Palmer, Johnson, & Kicklighter (1998) conducted an empirical study of burnout for in student affairs professionals and determined that “For men and women, hours spent advising student groups per week is positively related and hours of sleep per night is negatively related to Emotional Exhaustion” (p. 85). Furthermore, these long hours can lead to a lack of clear separation between domains of home and work (Clark, 2001), which further perpetuates the possibility and likelihood of either intense work/family conflict or burnout. Furthermore, Bender (2009) learned that through a national study of student affairs administrators, younger professionals felt a higher level of stress, and were more likely to leave the profession than their older counterparts.

Palmer, Murphy, Peck-Parrott, & Steinke (2001) conducted a study reviewing levels of burnout in live in (meaning administrators hold residence in the respective halls they are responsible for) University Residence Hall positions, and determined that supervisors must be proactive in preventing burnout, instead of dealing with the issue as it arrives. Furthermore, the authors link supportive supervision with overall job satisfaction, and extol the value of team building as a method to ensure practitioner welfare.

Furthermore, these issues directly contribute to a high level of turnover within the field of student affairs. Bender (2009) conducted a study of professionals involved in a student affairs focused professional organization and found the following,

Only 36% of the respondents indicated that they intended to do student affairs work for their entire career, with 39% reporting indecision and 25% clearly indicating that they did not intend to do student affairs work for their entire career. Of the ages 23-36, 41% indicated that they were undecided about a future in student affairs and 31% reported that they did not intend to stay in student affairs. (p. 560-561)

This notion is reinforced by Tull (2006) who indicates that student affairs professionals, especially those at the beginning of their tenure face a significant cultural shift, which many never recover from, resulting in a high rate of attrition.

Based on the above research, balance is a critical issue impacting the field of student affairs. The profession as a whole involves long hours and can lead to

unhealthy job relationships (Manning, 2001). This in turn can lead to higher levels of turnover (Ward, 1995) and lower job satisfaction (Berwick, 1992). These negative elements can have a direct impact on the overall performance of student affairs organizations (Chan, Shaffer, & Snape, 2004; Clark, 2001; Ward, 1995).

Howard-Hamilton, Palmer, Johnson, & Kicklighter (1998) phrase it best by stating:

If we are to retain and promote SAAs (student affairs administrators), then we must find ways to keep them from being stretched beyond their professional and physical limits. The quality of programs and services offered to students is determined by those responsible for delivering them, and it is difficult to attract quality people to a profession that often leads to burnout. (p.90)

Workplace Demands

Numerous articles exist on the concept of workplace family balance, many of which relate specifically to barriers and contributors to a lack of employee balance. Keene and Quadagno (2004), indicate that negative feelings towards family balance are often premeditated by a conflict between professional and personal roles. The authors refer to this as “spillover” and define it “as the reciprocal tension between the roles and obligations of being a parent or a spouse/partner on the one hand and an employee on the other” (p.3). Specifically from the perspective of student affairs, Berwick, (1992) Howard-Hamilton et al. (1998) and Ward, (1995) have indicated that long hours, combined with the service related nature of the field can lead to a

high level of work stress, impacting both the home and work sectors of practitioner life.

Clark (2001) researched balance from the perspective of five specific areas: role conflict, work satisfaction, home satisfaction, family functioning, and employee citizenship. But Clark also indicates that balance can be defined well beyond those constructs:

Balance was defined as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict. Although the use of this measure is unique, this definition of balance is common. By examining the patterns of association between the five facets of balance, it is instructive to note that balance, as currently defined, may be elusive. Although work satisfaction, employee citizenship and family functioning do vary together, role conflict does not. In other words, it is likely that a person can be satisfied at both work and home and function well in each, but not without some role conflict. The synergistic relationship between work and home that balance implies may be, at most, a rare occurrence (pp. 361-362).

Authors have made strong recommendations for how to encourage employee balance in organizations. Ward (1995) and Berwick (1992) indicate that clear expectations from supervisors, as well as behavior modeling on the part of senior staff members can encourage practitioners to seek levels of balance for themselves. Bailyn (1997) provides three key elements of supportive work

environments as additional reference points for employers to assist their employees:

- 1) Temporal Flexibility: the ability to set individualized work schedules
- 2) Operational Flexibility: the ability to control the conditions of work, specifically the ability to do so without restrictions
- 3) Supportive Supervision: organization's supportiveness for individuals with family responsibilities

University administrators state that a lack of all three of Bailyn's elements in university settings result in higher level of practitioner stress, and higher levels of turnover (Berwick, 1992; Jo, 2008; Ward, 1995). Jo states that in addition to the demand for flexible hours and dissatisfaction with individual supervisors, a lack of advancement opportunities for individuals result in higher levels of turnover, a sentiment echoed by Evans (1988). Furthermore, role ambiguity has been specifically mentioned as issues for the field of student affairs, and contributors to high turnover rates and low job satisfaction within the profession. Ward (1995) conducted an empirical study of new professionals in the field of student affairs, and determined the following:

Role ambiguity was found to be a stronger predictor of job satisfaction and propensity to leave than were role conflict, career mobility, work place formalization, task overload, or dissonance between student development

philosophies. The results indicate, in particular, the salience of role ambiguity as a variable in job satisfaction and the decision to leave. (p. 41). Ward defines role ambiguity as occurring when “information needed to guide one’s behavior is incomplete, insufficient, unclear or absent” (p. 34), which speaks directly to the level of impact supportive supervision can have on individuals work place satisfaction. This notion is further confirmed by Anderson, Coffee, & Byerly (2002) who reviewed data from a national study on the changing workforce:

Specifically, we found work-to-family conflict to be influenced by managerial support for and career consequences associated with with-family balance. This finding suggests that manager support is key for employees to successfully manage the integration of work with family and family with work. Employees need to know that managers support them in their efforts to balance work and family responsibilities (p. 805).

Gender Issues

Research on workplace balance has traditionally focused on the dual roles of women (Kerpelman & Schvaneveldt, 1999) due to perceived traditional roles of women as the caretakers for families and men as providers. Studies have shown that women do face the majority of workplace balance issues (Keene & Quadagno, 2004), a notion that is further emphasized by research conducted specifically in a university setting (Jo, 2008).

The research on balance related issues and their impact on men is somewhat scarce. Halrynjo (2009) indicates that the traditional role of men as

breadwinners is changing, and more men are finding themselves with a higher level of responsibility related to child-rearing. Furthermore, Emslie and Hunt (2009) indicate that many balance related studies are based on homogenized gender specific views—meaning all women are impacted the same way, as are all men. However, Martins, Eddleston and Vega (2002) surveyed part time MBA, and determined that men are more likely to sacrifice relationships for their professional careers, whereas women are more likely to do the opposite .

The authors state that rather than looking for areas of similarities, researchers must look for divergences within the sexes to create a comprehensive view on the impact of gender on balance related issues. Furthermore, Cinamon and Rich (2002) indicate that there can be a significant difference even in how men perceive their roles between work and home:

For example, one father may view work as very important and have high work values and work commitment because work best enables him to realize his preferred family roles as family breadwinner. In contrast, his male colleague may assign similar importance to work and have high work values and commitment because his job affords him power and control. (p. 538-539)

However, some research does exist on the impact of work stressors on the male perception of balance. Milkie and Petola (1999) analyzed data from a general social study of married and employed men and women to understand their definitions of work family balance, and determined that men have more difficulty

in dealing with temporal constraints—specifically longer work hours have more of a negative impact on men than they do on women. Batt & Valcour (2003) indicate through a study of close to 600 white color employees, that the desire to leave a position for another is lower when men have more control over their scheduling.

Milkie and Petola also indicate that despite the higher level of outside of work stressors, women tend to do a better job of creating and sustaining boundaries between work and home. As stated earlier, this point alone can play a key role in the student affairs professions, where practitioners are often called to work excessive numbers of hours (Howard-Hamilton et al, 1998). Furthermore, Krouse and Afifi (2007) posit that women are more likely to use communicative resources to cope with stress than their male counterparts, in that they are likely to use social resources, namely their work environments, to help them process through stressful situations, meaning their work environment can often be the cause of and the imbedded solution to work stress. Men, on the other hand are less likely to self-disclose levels of stress to fellow coworkers, and do not use their work environments as an opportunity to process through work or home stressors.

Generational Issues

Current literature also indicates that there are generational differences in how individuals value and perceive the concept of work/family balance. Specifically, the Baby Boomers, defined by Smola and Sutton (2002) as being born between 1946-1964, differ significantly in what value they place on work than Generation X (defined by the authors as being born between the mid-1960s and

1982), and the Millennials (defined by the authors as being born between 1979 and 1994). For the purpose of this study, definitions provided by Strauss and Howe (2000), as well as Smola and Sutton will be used to identify Baby Boomers as born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X as being born between 1965 and 1981, and Millennials being born post 1982.

Authors such as Smola and Sutton (2002) as well as Strauss and Howe (1991, 2000) indicate that generational differences are impacted both by societal and personal influences. From a societal perspective, the authors indicate that these generations were defined by the cultural elements impacting their youth. The Baby Boomers, for example, are impacted by events such as the Vietnam War, civil rights movements, and Watergate, developed a sense of entitlement, and expected the best in life (Smola & Sutton, 2002). As a result the Baby Boomers developed a lack of respect for authority and political institutions. Unlike their predecessors, the Generation Xers are significantly more diverse than their predecessors (Smola & Sutton, 2002). This generation is characterized by high divorce rates, resulting in a strong sense of individuality, and a strong value for stable family life. Lastly, the millennial generation is characterized as being socially active and constantly connected to each other through electronic means and has a strong appetite for work and high levels of achievement.

Each generation was also impacted by the generation of their parents as well (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Baby Boomers reacted to the mistakes shown by political, religious and other authoritarian figures with a high sense of cynicism and

skepticism. Shortly thereafter, Generation Xers reacted to the high level of family centric behavior by the Baby Boomer generation by valuing individuality and a "me-centric" attitude. Furthermore, due to the emergence of divorce as a viable option in previous generations, Generation Xers have found themselves relying more on collegial and platonic relationships. Millennials still maintain the sense of skepticism passed down from the previous two generations; however they feel the need to be connected to the world around them, as well as their family as a whole (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991). In essence the generational transitions and differences are developed as a result and in reaction to how previous generations acted and reacted to their own environments.

The generational differences significantly impact the way in which each group values work, and in turn the level to which they seek out a balance between their work and personal lives (Dex & Bond, 2005). Specifically, a strong foundation based on a puritanical work ethic resulted in the Baby Boomer generation being focused on "living to work" (Kunreuther, 2003, p. 451), meaning that work is central to their daily life and plays a key role in their day to day decisions.

On the other hand, Generation Xers are more focused on "working to live" (Kunreuther, 2003, p. 452), meaning that work is a means by which other goals are accomplished—work is not central to life, rather it is a means to an end. Smola and Sutton (2002) indicate that this perspective is based on a variety of reasons, including the perceived lack of loyalty and commitment that Generation X saw from their laid off parent's employers. Gursoy, Maier and Chi (2008) clarify by saying

“The [Generation X] learned from their parents’ experiences that going by the company rules is not likely to guarantee their job. Their philosophy is ‘Leave work at work’” (p. 452). Furthermore, Generation X is characterized as significantly more self-oriented than Baby Boomers (Dittmann, 2005).

Although research is currently still emerging regarding the Millennial generation’s perspectives on work, Gursoy et al (2008) have indicated that they combine elements of both Generation X and the Baby Boomers:

Like X-ers, they [Millennials] prefer flexible schedules. Work is not a priority for them. Their priorities are friends and family. However, this does not mean that they do not take their job and professional development very seriously. They are hard and ambitious workers; but unlike the Baby Boomers, they are not workaholics. (p. 452)

Additionally, similar to Generation Xers, and aligned with the concept of “working to live,” the Millennial generation has been characterized as craving a high level of flexibility and a desire to define the boundaries of their work environments, as it relates to personal time. (Kunreuther, 2003). Through a study of managers and their younger employee counterparts at nonprofit agencies, Kunreuther indicates that Generation Xers are equally likely to enter service related fields as their predecessors, but are more likely to face levels of role imbalance, or conflict due to competing priorities. This in turn creates challenges for their Baby Boomer supervisors, who to a certain extent were oblivious to such problems:

Several of the younger people we interviewed, especially the young men, were locked in a struggle between their work, which they felt required enormous time and commitment, and their desire to have and be involved with their children in ways that meant spending fewer hours on the job. One young staffer who talked about starting a family explained, “I can’t keep 12 hour days forever....I would love to have this job for the rest of my life, I just don’t know if that’s possible.”

The importance of time off then was generational in relation to the lifecycle. None of the older people we interviewed, including those who had raised a family, mentioned this conflict. Maybe they had gone through a similar struggle when they were young. If so, it now seemed completely out of their consciousness. The fact that that they appeared unaware of the depth of this conflict among younger staff was surprising and it is easy to see how these differences could result in unspoken expectations and conflicts (p. 454).

Generational differences can play a large role in the level to which work/family overlap is perceived negatively. For some (specifically Baby Boomers) it is not commonly an issue—it is simply part of the normal routine. For others (Generation Xers) the challenge of striking a balance between work and home lives is a challenge, and can result in high levels of stress or attrition.

However, authors have noted that homogenizing individuals based on their generational category can lead to skewed information. Hoover (2009) indicates that Millennials, specifically, often fall victim to predictive values which do not take

into consideration race or socio-economic background. Hoover asserts that these two key factors, when combined with an overemphasis on generational differences, can lead to a limited understanding of individual preferences, and over generalization of individual perspectives.

The above literature further reinforces the notion that balance is individually defined, and can be influenced by generational issues. The following section will provide details on the theoretical framework used to support this study.

Work/Family Border Theory

The central theoretical underpinning for this research will be Clark's (2000) Work/Border Theory. Through her theory, Clark discusses the fluid nature of work/family balance and how each has a significant impact on each other, specifically indicating that work and home can be considered two distinct parts of an individual's life, and must be studied as such:

Central to this theory is the idea that work and family constitute different domains or spheres which influence each other...for some individuals the transition is slight, for others the contrast between work and family is much greater, thus requiring a more extreme transition. People are border crossers who make daily transitions between these two settings, often tailoring their focus, their goals, and their interpersonal style to fit the unique demands of each. Though many aspects of work and home are difficult to alter, individuals can shape to some degree the nature of the

work and home domains, and the borders and bridges between them, in order to create a desired balance” (pp. 750-751)

This particular theory was chosen to further understand the impact of time commitments on student affairs practitioners. According to Clark, individuals make transitions across the roles they play on a daily basis. In essence, Clark indicates that individuals create personal meaning through their work, and define their boundaries based on the meaning they create. This process of interpreting their environment directly influences the way they perceive balance related issues.

Student affairs practitioners often spend a significant amount of time in their workplace (especially in the case of live-in residence hall advisors). This time imbalance must have some level of impact on practitioners’ ability to successfully “cross borders” on a daily basis.

Clark’s perspectives on work family balance have underpinned studies with topics ranging from individuals working from home (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2005; Pringle & Mallon, 2003; Tietze & Musson, 2002) to high performing software managers (Hyman, Baldry, Scholarios, & Bunzel, 2003; Scholarios & Marks, 2004). The key element linking studies using Clark’s perspectives is the impact of time constraints on the overlap between the domains of home and work due to positional requirements. Clark’s theory allows researchers to look at professions with a high level of overlap between the domains of work and home from a perspective of boundary flexibility, and provides a framework for understanding that the normal “9 to 5” work day may no longer exist. (Tietze & Musson, 2002).

Furthermore, Hyman, Baldry, Scholarios and Bunzel (2003) found through a study of cell center employees that the relationship between work and home cannot simply be mitigated through temporal adjustments:

There is evidence that work is intruding into people's private space through exhaustion, sleeplessness, and its conscious omnipresence. Under these conditions, simple temporal adjustments to starting and finishing times provide an inadequate framework for evaluating and prescribing for work-life balances. (p. 237)

Additionally, Kossek, Lautsch, and Eaton (2006) found through a study of employees at financial services organizations that boundaries were less based on structural interventions, and more based on psychologically, and individually created systems. The authors found that the day to day ability to create and manage schedules was much more effective in sustaining healthy work environments, than the implementation of flex scheduling or other temporally based interventions.

Authors have indicated that further research must be conducted in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of work/family balance on issues related to attrition, stress, and burnout (Berwick, 1992; Palmer, Murphy, Peck-Parrott, & Steinke, 2001; Ward, 1995). Clark's theory provides yet another viewpoint by which these critical issues can be studied.

Based on this literature review, there are a number of gaps in the current work/family balance related literature, and even more specifically related to the field of student affairs. Little empirical data exists illustrating the man practitioner

centric issues in student affairs as described by Manning (2001). Authors (Ward, 1995) have indicated that problems arise between practitioners and their workplace that lead to attrition, however few specifics are mentioned, and little content exists on how individuals experience their workplace.

Furthermore, little research currently exists regarding the male point of view on work/family balance. Current research focuses primarily on the role of women, and the issues they face on the day to day basis dealing with conflicts between work and home. This study will contribute the male perspective on navigating the same issues, albeit from the viewpoint of a specific profession. However, the content from this study will provide a unique viewpoint in to the processes by which the men interviewed make work/family related issues.

Lastly, this study will contribute to the current body of HRD related knowledge on work/family related issues. As indicated by a number of authors, work/family balance is an emergent and important issue for the field of HRD—one that impacts the way organizations operate and make decisions for the benefit of their employees. Furthermore, little qualitative data exists detailing struggles that student affairs practitioners have with the concept of work/family balance. This study will contribute additional understanding to the constructs by which individuals make day to day decisions regarding their boundaries between work and home.

With the above literature review as central areas of focus for this dissertation, the next chapter will focus on the study's research methods.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Balance between workplace/family demands has been identified as a critical issue for HRD (Pitt-Catsouphe, Matz-Costa, MacDermid, 2007; Polach, 2003).

Current HRD related literature has indicated an imbalance in how individuals experience and navigate through work/family demands can directly impact both individual and organizational performance (Grzywacz and Carlson & Carlson, 2007). It is, therefore, imperative for HRD professionals to understand this concept, and consider it when making organizational decisions.

Issues related to workplace/family demands have been identified as a critical issue for student affairs practitioners as well (Manning, 2001). Research has indicated that long hours, combined with the service related nature of the field can lead to a high level of work stress, impacting both the home and work sector of practitioner life (Berwick 1992; Howard-Hamilton, Palmer, Johnson, & Kicklighter, 1998; Ward, 1995). Therefore the intent of this study is to examine workplace family demands among male student affairs practitioners, specifically through the lens of Sue Campbell Clarks' (2000) work/family border theory. The primary research questions were:

- 3) How do men define and navigate through the boundaries between work and home?
- 4) What environmental or personal constructs impact the manner by which men make balance/boundary related decisions?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework supporting this study is Clark's (2000) Work/Family Border Theory. Clark posits that work and family are two different spheres that directly influence each other, and that individuals are "border crossers" who make routine transitions between the two areas. She indicates that the contrast between work and home is slight for some, and greater for others, leading to a higher level of perceived transition. Clark (2000) further indicates these transitions require individuals to tailor their focus, communication style, and overall interaction style to best suit the domain and role in which they are operating. Clark also focuses on the borders between the two domains, indicating that individuals can shape the borders between the two domains to build some level of desired balance.

Furthermore, Clark (2001) moves from defining balance simply as issue marked by time requirements, and focuses on the concept of "role conflict." She indicates the roles individuals play within the two domains of work and home can conflict, leading to individuals to feel "imbalanced" in their work/family lives.

This theory can be directly applied to student affairs, because as Manning (2001) and Lowery (2004) have indicated, the profession is marked by long hours and necessitates a high level of practitioner flexibility (Berwick, 1992; Lowery, 2004; Manning, 2001; Ward, 1995). Manning indicates these long hours force practitioners to shift their schedules on a daily basis, leading to an inability to clearly define boundaries between home and work.

Research Design

Clark (2000) indicates individuals navigate and define their boundaries between home and work based on their own surroundings, and that the notion of balance is personal based on individual perspectives. In order to gain a personalized, non-generic, view on how the men interviewed made balance related decisions, I used qualitative methods, which according to Merriam (1998) involves interpretation of meaning through language and action. Furthermore, qualitative research allows participants to reflect their own reality, through the use of interviews, document analysis, and personal reflection, which in turn allowed me to make sense of the meaning that the individuals attached to specific phenomena of work/family border related issues and decisions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Specifically for the concept of work life balance, qualitative methods provided rich, individualized data regarding the nature and impact of balance and role conflict for the men interviewed.

I used a multiple case study approach, which according to Merriam (1998), allows a researcher to review an issue or concept through the experiences of multiple people within a bounded system. Merriam defines a bounded system as, “a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). For this particular study, the term “bounded system” referred to individuals with experience in university student affairs organizations. Student affairs practitioners were interviewed and the resulting data was used to interpret their experiences in relation to work family balance. Seven cases were selected and interpreted using a

cross-case perspective, to gain a holistic, collective perspective on balance from multiple viewpoints. The individuals and their perceptions of work family border issues were used as the primary units of analysis for the study. Secondary units of analysis included job descriptions and organizational charts to further understand the role and function of the individual in the organization. Cases were reviewed from a cross case perspective, to review potential differences and similarities in how male student affairs practitioners defined and experienced balance, which according to Yin (2009) provided me the opportunity to gain a variety of perspectives on one phenomenon, can provide robust, thorough data.

Case Selection

Cases were selected based on Merriam's (1998) definition of purposive sampling, which indicates the selection of specific samples based on topicality and probability for providing the most in-depth source of information. Snowball or network sampling was used to recruit a variety of diverse participants (Merriam, 1998). The first participant was selected based on recommendations from my committee member involved in the field of student affairs. Each further participant was asked to suggest additional potential participants. Furthermore, I made use of my committee members to recommend cases to provide rich content by which to study the concept of work/family balance.

Cases were selected based on a variety of formats, including marital/parental status, years in the profession, type of institution, and total years of service within student affairs. Three specific ranges were used: 1-5 years of

service, 6-10 years of service, and 10+ years of service to stratify data for further analysis. Berwick (1992) and Ward (1995) indicate that gender, number of years in the profession, and the hierarchical level within a student affairs organization all have a direct impact the reasons why practitioners reach points of imbalance. Through the process of stratifying the years of service within the profession, I was able to recruit a level of variation in generations as well as marital/family status, all of which have been indicated as key issues in how individuals perceive balance related issues (Berwick, 1992; Dex & Bond, 2005; Keene & Quadagno, 2004; Kerpelman & Schvaneveldt, 1999; Kunreuther, 2003; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Data Collection

Yin (2009) indicates there are a variety of methods by which to collect data in a qualitative case study approach. I used interviews and document analysis as the main data sources, which according to Dooley (2002) can provide rich information to bolster the rationale behind using case study research.

Selected individuals were interviewed either via phone or in person, depending on location. Interviews lasted roughly 45-90 minutes, and were tape recorded and then transcribed by an external party. Interviews first focused on biographical information, and introductory information regarding the nature of the individuals' jobs. Secondly, because this study focused on individual perceptions of work/family balance, interviews focused on how the individuals defined their roles at home and work and to what level those roles conflicted during seasons of high activity and low activity through the use of open ended questions.

Questions were level one and level two as defined by Yin (2009). Level one question, simplistic in nature, focused primarily on that individual's background, home life and current position (Appendix C). Level two questions focused on the following three main points:

- 1) Defining borders between home and work
- 2) Border conflicts: when are subjects feeling a level of role conflict between the two domains?
- 3) Mitigating reasons behind perceptions of role conflict

Responses collected through the interview process were compared across all interviews received and formed the foundation for the data analysis. Individuals were asked to share stories regarding their experiences regarding role conflict, balance, and the impact of time demands on their personal and professional life.

Document analysis was used in a variety of ways for this study. Berwick (1992) and Ward (1995) indicate that role conflict can occur when roles are not clearly defined; therefore job descriptions were used to understand the original function of the individual within the student affairs organization. Furthermore, organizational charts were studied to understand clearly the individual's role within the student affairs organization.

All content received was managed based on required IRB protocol, and all participants received a letter of introduction (Appendix A) and were required to sign an informed consent form notifying them of the intent and purpose behind the

study (Appendix B). Pseudonyms were used in the final report for all participants, and all transcripts and information received will be kept on file in the researchers office for a minimum of three years.

Data Analysis

Through the process, I coded the data received was coded to further understand, organize, and analyze information received (Boyatzis, 1998). Boyatzis' perspectives on inductive coding, or data driven coding were used to encode the information received. The unit of analysis was the individual and their perspectives on work/family border issues.

Transcribed Data was broken down into subsamples based on the number of years in the Student Affairs profession. From there, data was coded and compared to other participants within the same subsample. Those codes were in turn compared to the participants within the other subsamples to ensure that all data was coded correctly and thoroughly. Coding was further aided through the use of conceptually clustered matrices, as defined by Miles and Huberman (1994). This approach provided a structural matrix by which similar codes were grouped together, and then analyzed to create specific themes by which all of the pieces of coded data could be generalized, to aid in the data analysis process.

Following the coding process, meaning was generated from the coded data, where I interpreted and generalized meaning from the information received (Ruona, 2005), specifically in relation both to my individual research questions and based on the subsample (based on years of service) I was studying. Through this

process, the data was analyzed and rich, thick descriptions regarding the relationships between the nature of the practitioner work and their concept of balance was studied.

Trustworthiness

Through this study, an emphasis was placed on credibility and trustworthiness to ensure that the data, and assertions derived from the data, best match the research subjects' experiences. Yin (2009) describes four essential tests to ensure the quality of the research presented through this dissertation: construct validity, defined by Yin as "identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied" (p. 40), internal validity, defined as "seeking to establish a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships" (p. 40), external validity—defined "the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized" (p. 40), and reliability, defined as "demonstrating that the operations of a study—such as data collection procedures, can be repeated with the same results" (p. 40). Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) reframe the concepts used by Yin, but with naturalistic terminology. Therefore I used a combination of Yin (2009), Erlandson et al. (1993), and Merriam (1998) as definitions by which trustworthiness was established:

- 1) I used multiple sources of evidence (interviews and document analysis) and participants were given the opportunity to read all transcribed interviews for accuracy.

- 2) All research subjects were given the opportunity to review interview transcripts. Furthermore, subjects were given the opportunity to review my interpretations of data. Lastly, cross case analysis was used to ensure that any conclusions reached were based on a holistic perspective of all cases, thus providing a level of credibility to the overall study.
- 3) I used thick description to describe all interactions; purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who best provided information for the study, to provide rich data regarding the focus of my study, ensuring a level of transferability.
- 4) Dependability: In order to ensure that data analysis and findings would be consistent if the research were conducted again, all subjects were involved with the study for a suitable amount of time. Additionally, the study was guided by a solid theoretical foundation. All research was conducted under the guidance of both the IRB and the dissertation committee as a whole.
- 5) In order to ensure that the findings are specific to the subject being studied, and not detrimentally influenced by my own paradigm, I have clarified my bias through the research proposal. Research subjects were aware of the underlying motivations behind conducting the survey before starting. In addition, the final report includes the author's motivation and past experience to provide context behind the study, thus providing a level of confirmability.

Researcher Subjectivity

Several authors have discussed researcher subjectivity in case study research (Dooley, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2009). These authors describe the value in researcher perspectives and how they impact the overall research process, but both authors also caution that individual perspectives must be acknowledged, and accounted for in the research process. Additionally, Dooley (2002) indicates that study validity can be questioned without fully disclosing the researcher relationship to the content being researched. Therefore, in this section, I will share my experience with work family balance through my career, in hopes of clarifying my bias.

I started working in student affairs at the University of Arkansas in the fall of 2002 as a graduate student. At that point in time, the only demands on my time were my academics and my job responsibilities. I truly found no difficulty whatsoever in balancing my time—I was comfortable with spending late evenings and weekends at the office, due to the lack of other demands on my time.

In January of 2005, I accepted a position at Texas A&M as a co-advisor in our Department of Student Activities to a high functioning student organization. At that time, my masters degree was complete, and I had no other demands on my time beyond my job responsibilities. My position required numerous evening and weekend meetings, and included a three week period at the end of every summer where I was required to accompany my students to a camp program.

In the spring of 2006, I met my soon to be wife, and in the fall of 2006, I started my doctoral studies as well. These two significant events resulted in a shift in my priorities, and in turn the level of balance I was challenged to find between all of my areas of responsibility. My wife and I became engaged in the spring of 2007, and married in the fall of 2007. Throughout all of these experiences, I was still a part time graduate student, and a full time advisor to the earlier referenced student organization.

In the fall of 2007, I became the only full time advisor to the student organization (as mentioned, I was the co-advisor earlier). This presented a new set of demands on my time. Additionally, I received, what I felt as, little support from my supervisor or my department to amend my responsibilities, or shift the way I was advising the group based on the fact that we were short staffed. In the Spring of 2008, I reached my personal limits of what I could handle between my varying roles, essentially I hit a low point and felt that there was no way for me to effectively handle all of my responsibilities. I began the search for a new position, and left the field of Student Affairs in the summer of 2008 for a position in an academic unit.

The challenges I faced were internally driven—I made the choice to get married and start a PhD program, however the further I progressed into my career, my responsibilities only increased, causing me to find significant difficulty in maintaining a high level of performance in every area of my personal, academic, and career life.

These experiences formed the basis of my topic of inquiry. Based on a review of literature, work family balance is a critical issue both for HRD and student affairs practitioners as well; therefore I feel this is an excellent opportunity to review this phenomenon for my own personal knowledge, and to contribute to the overall literature base as well.

Summary

The overall intent for this study is to provide a scholarly inquiry into the nature of work/family balance and how men in student affairs define and navigate through the boundaries between work and home. This study was conducted using a qualitative, multiple case study approach to provide individualized perspective on work/family demands. By reviewing this issue from a variety of perspectives, I was able to provide a thorough, qualitative, view on the issue of work family balance in organizations. The following chapter will provide an overview of my findings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The previous chapter described the methodology applied in this dissertation, including sampling strategy, method of data collection/analysis and information linking chosen methodology to the research questions/intent. This chapter will provide information on results gained from the study itself, including background information and themes emerging from the individual cases.

Methodology Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the concept of work/family balance through the lens of male student affairs practitioners. Clark (2001) indicates that work/family balance is experienced on an individualized basis with each person experiencing their environment, and the arising challenges, in their own way. Therefore qualitative methods, specifically case studies, were used to interpret how each of the selected individuals made meaning of their experience, specific to the phenomena of work/family balance related issues.

Cases were selected using Merriam's (1998) definition of purposive sampling allowing me to select specific cases to provide topical content to further understand the issue in question. Specifically, snowball/network strategies were used—cases were selected based on recommendations from individuals interviewed, as well as on recommendation from members of my dissertation committee. As a result, seven participants, representing a variety of ages, marital

statuses, and year of experiences provided their experiences related to work/family balance.

Case Descriptions

This section will describe the individual cases selected for this study.

Pseudonyms will be used to protect their identity.

Administrator 1

Administrator 1 is a vice president for student affairs at a faith based private institution with roughly 15,000 students. He has 28 years of experience in the field of student affairs, and has been at his current institution for one and a half years. Administrator 1 is directly responsible for the Division of Student Life, and has four people reporting directly to him, who in turn supervise roughly 20 individual departments.

Administrator 1 has been married for over 20 years, and has three children, two of which are in college, and one of which is currently a sophomore in high school.

Administrator 2

Administrator 2 is the director of housing at public institution with roughly 5,000 students, who recently also assumed the duties of interim dean of students. He has eight years of experience in the field of student affairs, and has been at his current position for five years. Administrator 2 is responsible for the oversight of on campus life, including five direct reports, who in turn supervise roughly 40 student resident advisors. Additionally, Administrator 2 has assumed the

responsibilities associated with student conduct for both on and off campus students. Administrator 2 is single with no children.

Administrator 3

Administrator 3 is the current dean of students/associate vice president at a private institution with roughly 14,000 students. He has 18 years of experience in the field of student affairs, and has been in his current position for 13 months.

Administrator 3 is responsible for the direct supervision of six staff members, who in turn supervise departments within the division of student affairs. Administrator 3 has been married for 15+ years and has two children under the age of 10.

Administrator 4

Administrator 4 is a vice present for student affairs at a public institution with roughly 24,000 students. He has 18 years of experience in the field of student affairs, and has been in his current position for one and a half years. Administrator 4 is responsible for the overall supervision of the division of student affairs, including six direct reports, who in turn supervise six departments. Administrator 3 has been married for six years and has a three year old daughter.

Administrator 5

Administrator 5 is a hall director at a private institution with roughly 15,000 students. He has been in the field of student affairs for two years, with this being his first professional position post graduate school. He is responsible for the supervision of a community of university owned off campus apartments, and

supervises six student resident assistants. Administrator 5 is engaged to his partner, and has no children.

Administrator 6

Administrator 6 is a program coordinator for service programs at a public institution with roughly 30,000 students. He has been in the field of student affairs for six years, and in his current position for four years. He is responsible for coordinating university wide service programs, and also serves as a lecturer. He is responsible for the direct supervision of three part time employees. Administrator 6 is married with no children.

Administrator 7

Administrator 7 is a program coordinator for leadership programs at a public institution with roughly 30,000 students. He entered the field of student affairs at a later age, and therefore is 30 years old in an entry level position. He is responsible for coordinating university wide leadership activities, and also serves as a part time lecturer for the university. He is responsible for the supervision of one graduate assistant and 2-3 student workers in a variety of positions.

Administrator 7 is married with three children under the age of 10 years old.

Table 1 (below) provides an overview of participant demographics.

Table 1: Participant Data

Pseudonym	Position Title	Type of Institution	Number of Students	Years of Experience (Years in Position)	Direct/Indirect Reports	Marital Status	Children
Administrator 1	Vice President for Student Affairs	Private	15,000	28(1.5)	4 supervising 20 individual departments	Married for 20+ years	3 (two in college, one in High school)
Administrator 2	Director of Housing	Public	5,000	8 (5)	4 direct/40 Indirect	Single	None
Administrator 3	Dean of Students/Associate Vice President	Private	14,000	18 (13 Months)	3 supervising 20 individual departments	Married for 15+ years	2 (both under the age of 10)
Administrator 4	Vice President for Student Affairs	Public	24,000	18 (1.5)	6 supervising 6 departments	Married 6 years	1 (3 year old daughter)
Administrator 5	Hall Director	Private	15,000	2 (2)	6 direct reports	Partnered/Engaged	None
Administrator 6	Program Coordinator	Public	30,000	6 (4)	3 part time reports	Married	None
Administrator 7	Program Coordinator	Public	30,000	2 (2)	3-4 part time reports	Married	Three (all under the age of 10.

Results

Results are presented via three separate emergent themes, each with up to four subthemes. Theme Information regarding each theme will be shared along with supporting data from transcribed interview content. Table 2 provides an overview of all emergent research themes.

Table 2: Research Themes

Theme #1: Boundary Definition	
	Subtheme #1: Reactive/Proactive Approach to Boundary Definition
	Subtheme #2: Marital/Parental Status
	Subtheme #3: Intentional Overlap
	Subtheme #4: Emotional Consequences
Theme #2: Evolving Definitions/Philosophies	
Theme #3: Work Environment	
	Subtheme #1: Organizational Culture
	Subtheme #2: Boundary Control
	Subtheme #3: Organizational Structure

Theme 1: Boundary Definition

Subtheme: Reactive/Proactive Approach to Boundary Definition

After analyzing themes across the individual subsamples (defined by years of service in the profession), information emerged regarding a differentiation in how individuals defined their boundaries. The individuals at the top of their profession, with 10+ years of experience took a more proactive approach to defining and navigating boundaries—meaning they exercised more preemptive control in defining said boundaries based on their personal values and goals, while administrators with less experience let their work life be the basis by which their home life was defined—a more reactive approach. Specifically Administrator 3 said:

In my case, I'm a husband, I'm a father, I'm a vice-president for student life. I have the role of trying to keep myself relatively fit. I have a spiritual life, so I wanna have a relationship with God – that's a role in my life. I'm a son, I'm a friend – I have all these roles in my life.

Administrator 1 shared a similar mentality, but took it one step further and indicated that based on his worldview, all other responsibilities were subservient to his responsibilities at home:

I actually start off with looking at what am I committed to at home. So I really think about my commitments of time at home, whether it's my day to come home and stay with the baby, or what are some obligations at home that we need to take care of first... But for me it was important that we strike

a balance at home first, and then work ends up being my secondary responsibility.

Administrator 3 also indicated that his personal values impacted his boundary definitions significantly. He specified that he was comfortable with working the long hours, and took responsibility for the fact that he felt compelled to continue working at a high pace:

Yes – well, you know, here's what I'll say about jobs, is that you get out of it what you put into it. So I don't think . . . even people that say I have an 8-5 job, I think they're slackers. Because I guarantee you that there is somebody in that office and that building and department that is working until 8:00 at night and is coming in at 6:00 in the morning. If you're simply going in at 8:00 when you have to be there, leaving at 12:00 for lunch, coming back at 1:00, and then leaving at 5:00, you're not gonna go anywhere. I just think that anybody that has that mentality – I don't understand that at all.

All of these responses indicated a high level of preemptive, proactive control in defining boundaries based on personal values and goals. Not all three indicated immediately that family was their number one priority; however they did take a high level of ownership in their own approach to navigating and defining individual boundaries.

The paradigm on boundary definition shifted significantly when discussed among the individuals with less experience in the field of student affairs. Individuals took a more reactive approach to dealing with work/life separation,

indicating that, in some sense, their ability to define boundaries was more based on their work related responsibilities than their own personal values. Administrator 2 spoke positively about his experiences with boundary definition; however it was inferable that his boundaries were first defined by his work:

Well, I'm kinda going back to what you prefaced the conversation with, talking about some people saying work and home are two completely separate entities. I pretty much do that honestly, Shailen. For the most part, I try to put in a hard day from 8-5, and then when 5:00 hits, if there's stuff on my desk that can wait until tomorrow, then it's gonna wait until tomorrow. And I'm gonna go home, and then my focus is gonna be on family, and I'm not gonna think about work, unless I'm on call and get a work call. And then if I get a call, I'll handle that, and when it's done it's done – I'm back again to family time. So I just try to make sure that I separate them. When 5:00 hits, its family time.

On the surface, this seems consistent with the proactive approach used by the administrators with 10+ years of experience, however it can be inferred that Administrator 2's home life is still defined by his ability to separate from his work at 5 pm.

Similarly, Administrator 6 shared perspectives that further reinforced the notion that that individuals with fewer years of experience tend to first look at their responsibilities at work as the paradigm by which boundaries are defined by stating:

So I would say that balance really to me means being able to give as much as I need for obviously my job. And because of my position, my primary responsibility and job is to work with students, and so balancing that with the students I work with, but then also obviously balancing my home responsibilities.

In essence, based on information received through interviews, it seemed that more years' experience resulted in the ability and the desire to exercise control over boundary defining. Individuals with 10+ years of experience framed their paradigm on balance/boundary definition first based off their values—whether they were family, faith based, or on a previously existing work ethic, but either way they exercised proactive control on boundary defining. On the other hand, individuals with less experience defined their boundaries *as a result of* their work responsibilities.

Subtheme 2: Marital/Parental Status

Out of the seven cases interviewed for this dissertation, five were married men, and one involved an engaged, partnered relationship. Also, out of the seven cases, four individuals had children. Based on the information gathered, the role of marital and parental statuses played a complex and mostly positive role in individuals' ability to maintain a healthy level of balance and commit to effective boundary navigation on a day to day basis.

On the whole, discussion involving married/engaged relationships and their impact on levels of work/family balance were positive. Each individual interviewed

indicated that their spouse/partner provided levels of encouragement and accountability in trying to maintain a “healthy” work life balance. Administrator 1 indicated that a weekly lunch, despite his hectic schedule, was necessary to keep him balanced:

But one barometer for me is indeed my wife. I mean she'll let me know when things are getting rough. I like to be smart enough to anticipate it, so that she doesn't have to get upset with me or say something to me. Because I think that's one of my roles with my family is, I need to be smart enough to head this stuff off at the pass. I do things like – we would have a consistent once-a-week lunch – I mean I protect it with my life – to tell her that she's important to me. And you know, yes, it's a busy time, and yes, things are crazy at work, but she can count on me, and I can count on her, and that we're gonna have that lunch during that time every week.

Both Administrators 3 and 4 indicated that a high level of understanding by spouses as to the nature of the student affairs profession aided them in their career progression as well as in their day to day decision making processes. Administrator 3 had this to say:

Yeah. When I started out . . . and the good thing for me is that I have a wife that knows that I absolutely love what I do. She knew from day one that I was gonna be in student affairs, and had some way of understanding what that is. And so I always included her on the front end, if I had things, you know, I'd make sure she knew who I worked with, who my boss was, who

the people that worked for me were, and invite her to programs so that she could see what I was doing. So she understands that I absolutely love what I do, so that helps.

Similarly, other administrators interviewed indicated that the presence of family actually provided them with a reason to plan their time effectively, and maintain some sort of separation between work and home. Administrator 5 was involved in a long distance relationship with his partner, who then moved to the same city to live with him. He (Administrator 5) actually found that the long distance relationship allowed for easier communication on a regular basis, and being in the same town required him to physically make time to for his partner—leading to the necessity of turning down responsibilities and work related social engagements.

Administrator 4 states it explicitly by saying:

The difference for me has been family. When I was single, I didn't think anything of this stuff, and I didn't think about running home for anything. I worked until the work got done, and in fact I stayed even later to get work done for the next couple days, so that was not an issue. But with a family, a wife and a kid, that is my entire reason for leaving work before my work is done, to participate in something at home, even it's just sitting down watching TV with them or having dinner. So it is totally about them right now that drives me to wanna get out of here in a reasonable time.

Parental status also significantly impacted the way that individuals navigate through their day to day decisions regarding boundary definitions and work/family

balance. The four individuals with children were quick to point out the fallacy of “quality versus quantity” as being effective in child raising. Each of the four indicated that that the myth of quality time versus quantity of time being effective in the process of raising a child. Each indicated that there was no substitute for a significant amount of time spent with their children. Administrator 7 described a complex interplay, where the more time he spent with his children, the more patience he had for them...whereas if his job required him to be away from his children for an extended amount of time, upon returning he found himself reacting to his children with little patience, and looking at them as “little monsters.”

Interestingly enough, Administrator 6 expressed that his office was not as supportive of individuals in married relationships without children trying to make seek out levels of personal balance—that in his department’s view, children were the only permissive element allowing practitioners to seek time off specifically:

I think a lot of it is, there’s an impression . . . and I get the impression here within student affairs, that because I don’t have children right now, I shouldn’t be asking for the balance and time that professionals with children do. And so that’s something that I definitely encounter a lot. It’s not necessarily overt – it’s not somebody saying, “Well, why do you wanna go and do that?” It’s more of just, “Well, you don’t have any kids – you don’t need to go home early, or you don’t need to stay home if your kids are sick.”

Administrator 6 went on to indicate that the lack of children actually resulted in him having to make more of an effort to convince his supervisors to allow him time off,

They don't really see necessarily a reason for me to wanna keep balance.

And so that's something that I encounter pretty frequently. And I think particularly working in an office where a lot of the professionals have children, I get that a lot. And so if I try to make sure that I'm balanced, or if I leave early one day, I really sometimes need to justify it more than somebody who has a child who can just leave.

On the whole, the men interviewed for this study indicated that their relationships with their spouses/partner and children were positive influences on their work/family balance paradigm—one of support, accountability, and often times a fundamental reason to maintain a level of balance.

Subtheme 3: Intentional Overlap

Information emerged on the men's desire to initiate a level of overlap between work and home—meaning intentional opportunities to combine both the work and home domains. Clark's (2000) theories on work family balance are reinforced that the notion that individuals are border crossers, who continuously navigate through the boundaries between home and work. Clark also posits that the concept of "overlap" can negatively impact an individual's perceptions on work and home (overlap being when the two domains conflict, typically from a temporal perspective). Previously, this dissertation has discussed the high numbers of hours

involved with the field of student affairs, and the impact that has on its practitioners.

Interestingly enough, individuals interviewed for this study indicated that they look for areas of overlap in their positions to involve their personal relationships (with spouses/partners and children) with their work related responsibilities. Specifically, Administrator 3 describes how he finds satisfaction in bringing his children to work related events, and the positive resulting positive effects on their development:

At 7-8-13 years old, they're getting exposed to a lifestyle – they've grown up quickly. They are much more socially mature than anybody twice their age. So along the way, they see things and hear things – I think it's good for them. I mean we have discussions around those things that they see and hear about what's appropriate, what's inappropriate, you know, why I don't say anything to those students, "But if you do that, I'm gonna knock your head off." ...You know, Friday night, we're having a . . . there's a band that's gonna be out here from 9:00 to midnight. I'll bring them out here – to me, that's a happy balance. There's plenty of colleagues that I have that would not dare bring their kids to a college concert on campus. To me, I think that just adds to their overall development. I think it's good for them to see that, it's good for them to be comfortable. I mean I never stepped foot on a college campus until I enrolled in college.

Administrator 6's spouse currently works for a non-profit agency. His job responsibilities include publicizing community service related activities to students on campus. To that end, he's partnered up with his wife's non-profit agency to provide a service learning experience that both he and his wife can engage in personally and professionally. Administrator 6 also found that intentionally discussing his relationship with his wife allows for his students to see him as a whole complete person with responsibilities outside the hours of work, instead of a monolithic employee who is available at their convenience:

So I talk about my wife, I talk about the things that I do outside of the space that they see me. And so they understand that I'm not just leaving, or if I can't stay for entire meeting, I'm not just leaving because I don't wanna be there. But they understand because either I'm talking about what I'm doing, I'm letting them know what I'm doing. Many of them know my wife, and so they can kind of get a feel for it, so it's not just me, "Oh, I'm bored at this meeting at 8:00 at night, I'm just gonna go ahead and leave."

Similarly, Administrator 7 indicated that his ability to intentionally overlap the domains of work and home contributed to his students having a better understanding of who he is as a person, and made him feel as if the lines between work and home were blurred.

So yeah, since the beginning of this job, for the past two years, especially in that first year when I had a supervisor who was really supportive of that, my wife and kids would probably come eat lunch with me at least twice a week,

sometimes once a week. And they would come and we would eat in my office with the door open. People knew them and saw them, and it made me feel very congruent. It made me feel kind of like this is great. They would come to some of the programs, and they would hang out on the football field while we had this big program. If we had student programs that were compatible with family, I have my kids come to that, and the students love to see the kids.

Administrator 4 prefaced his conversation with the fact that he made decisions for his family first and foremost, seeks out areas of integration and intentional overlap. Although he finds it satisfying, he's learned that his family thinks otherwise,

I try to blur the lines as much as possible. Like when I have an evening event, I always invite my wife and daughter to come. I like to kill two birds with one stone. But that's not quality time for them. They're not as receptive to it as I would think they might be. So it's something that I enjoy doing, but they don't typically enjoy that – well, my daughter just wants to be out and about, but my wife would rather not do that. So as much as I try to integrate them, it doesn't always work.

The reason that his wife uses is in stark contrast to the previously discussed notion of “quantity time” over “quality”. In this particular instance, although Administrator Four would prefer to spend a significant *amount* of time with his wife and child, his wife feels that the time spent is not effective, given the fact that Administrator 4 is on the job during the event,

The other challenge – I want more integration. I want to be able to invite them to be a part of this world and have them participate in stuff so we can kinda kill two birds with one stone. You know, us enjoy some time together, and me get something done at work. But my wife doesn't like that model – she doesn't like the shared attention where I'm attempting to pay attention to an event or group of students or facilitate a discussion, and at the same time calling myself giving quality time to my family. So I wanna be able to integrate those two, and she's not interested in that integration. So those are areas that I really need to work on.

These administrators have acknowledged the temporal constraints that the profession demands (Manning, 2001), and have done their best to make it work for them by integrating both domains into a daily routine. The levels of effectiveness vary from individual to individual, however the effort is being made to deal with the increased demands in a professionally and personally productive manner.

Subtheme 4: Emotional Consequences

The obvious question that arose through this process was “what visceral feeling do men experience as a result of a lack of balance or overlap?” For the most part the feeling was not physical; rather all men interviewed indicated emotional reactions to overlap. Typically the emotions ranged from stress, to guilt, but most all referred to the emotions within the context of the impact that their jobs had on their spouse/partner and children. The emotions aren't solely based on the overlap, they are based mostly on the impact the overlap has on others.

Most of the feelings described by the individuals interviewed centered on guilt associated with missing events. Specifically, Administrator 4 stated the following,

And then the other challenge for me is at home, dealing with the guilt of not being there. The emotional side of it is those nights when we have agreed that I would be out or stay at work. I always feel like I'm missing something. There's some things that my daughter might be doing or getting ready to get into – she's three years old now. And it's hard for me to not be involved in those things. You know, I'm here taking care of other people's kids, but I'm not spending enough time with my kid. So it makes me, when I get a chance to be at home, I just try to give it all to her. And then it makes me say okay, this weekend I'm free, and I'm gonna be completely her. But I know that time isn't just time you spend on weekend. I need to have that type of time on a regular basis. So the emotional challenge for me is just the feeling guilty of not being at home more often.

Other individuals indicated that, guilt aside, they felt a significant level of emotional exhaustion from the high levels of overlap and long hours. The result of the emotional overlap varied from person to person. For Administrator 7, the imbalance is marked by severe emotional exhaustion,

Because of that, when I return home, again, it's not so much about hours, it's more about the amount of energy or emotion that I have left to give my family. It's the concept that when I get home, you know, I'm so drained from

whatever it was I did at work – I only see my kids for a couple hours, and that's just laying on the couch trying to reenergize. And so it's not so much a physical exhaustion as it is – it can be, but it's more emotionally draining, is what I kinda see that imbalance as.

In Administrator 6's case, this emotional, not the physical toll, impact has caused him to question his choice to continue in the profession:

I think it's a pretty big discouragement as far as wanting to stick with a career, to be real honest. I mean I've had some doubts about sticking with student affairs. I love working in higher education, but student affairs, the lack of that balance or encouragement of balance has really been discouraging to me. And obviously my family knows it, they recognize it all the time. I mean fortunately <spouse name> understands the student affairs lifestyle as she was involved as a student. But she doesn't understand my need or sometimes the requirement to work six out of seven days for 12 hours.

Other administrators interviewed echoed the sentiments that the difficult part of the position was not the hours, rather the impact that their profession had on their loved ones. The levels of exhaustion, and burnout were not defined from an individual perspective; rather they were defined from the perspective of a family unit. Even Administrator 2, who is single without children, described that the hours he spends in his role as Director of Housing (including on call hours) result in a strain in the relationship between him and his extended family:

I can tell you, there are times where like if I go home on a weekend, Sunday evening I'm hanging out with my family, and they're all still hanging out, and I gotta drive back for work, and I'm thinking, "Geez, man, this job is kinda starting to get on my nerves a little bit." Because it would be nice to be able to stay here and spend time with my family.

These notions bring about an interesting contrast in the fact that these men look at their families as a positive influence on their ability to stay balanced, however the family members also serve as the barometer, and the consequences for the significant amount of overlap the profession requires. The barometer remark is best defined by Administrator 1 who says

So I mean she really kept reinforcing to me that I needed to be engaged, I needed to be there, you know. She understood the job, and that there were times that I wasn't gonna be there, I was gonna have to work late, or work weekends, or do school work. She understood that, but she was a stickler not to let me use any of my margin time or discretionary time in a way that didn't line up with what I said my values were.

In short, these men defined their reactions to overlap/imbalance based solely on the impact it had on others. As indicated in an above theme, were it not for their families, two administrators indicated that they would be at work constantly. So again, what results is a complex relationship between their home and work domains that can be both positive and negative.

Theme 2: Evolving Definitions/Philosophies

The men interviewed for this dissertation indicated that their definition of work/family balance evolved over time based on their position and other demands on their time. Among the research assumptions through this process was that generational differences would play a role in how individuals deal with work/family balance related issues. Specifically, research has indicated that generation can significantly impact whether individuals choose to “live to work” or “work to live”. In the case of the individuals interviewed for this dissertation, results indicate that no generational differences exist. Rather the men interviewed detailed an emergent, evolving definition of balance, based on their marital and parental status. All of the men surveyed indicated a high level of connection to their profession regardless of age. Administrator 4 indicated that his wife and daughter are the sole reason for him reframing his paradigm on balance

Yeah, like I was saying, my average hours were like 50-60-70 hours. I would think my average hours then would be between 70-80 regularly. I would just stay here, eat dinner here, leave at 7-8 o'clock at night, go home, shower, and get up and do it again the next day. I mean I would probably be working from about 6am until 8pm every day and not think anything of it. I would live on campus more than I would live at home. And I've done that before – like that's where I used to be when I was in Arkansas and I was single. I mean I was a workaholic, and I was at peace with it. This whole concept of balance was, I kept thinking to myself, “Why do you want balance? I mean

you enjoy what you're doing. Then stay there and do it until you're done.

Everything that you need is on campus, places to eat, places to sleep, a place to workout, go watch a movie, hang out with students. So yeah, I would easily be doing 70-80 hours if I didn't have a family at home.

Similarly, all administrators, regardless of age indicated that their perceptions on balance had evolved over their profession for a variety of reasons, related to personal wellness, responsibilities to spouses/partner and children, or increased amount of professional experience—the lessons of which indicated what was worth sacrificing personal time, and what was not. Administrator 5 went through the unique process of going through the shift from a long distance relationship to a live-in relationship with his partner, which directly impacted his ability and perspective on balance,

Yeah, in a weird sorta way. I think that because . . . especially when I first got here, because Jason wasn't physically here, and I was still meeting people and making new friends. I think I enjoyed being able to do things in the evening, maybe once or twice a week, so I was interacting with students, so I was working, because like I have a lot of really close friends here. And I made a lot of friends my first year, but I think that in a weird sort of way, like I enjoyed working and being around students because it meant that I didn't have to be at home by myself, in a weird sort of way.

Administrator 1 described that the transition from thinking mainly about his profession to having to think about his children was not an easy one—and one that caused stress in his relationship:

At times, it irritated me, you know, it really did. And at times I would say weird things like, “Well, you know I’m not at the bar – it’s not like I’m going golfing.” And she would just look at me and go, “I know, and there’s no reason for you to be doing those things,” in essence saying, “because you say your priorities are X, Y, and Z.” And again, not in a mean or selfish way – she was helping to remind me to live a life of integrity. If I say my faith, my family, my friendships, and then my forte are my values, I need to make sure that I’m living those out, and prioritizing my family was a part of that. But she knew, though, that that didn’t mean I was home every night at 5:00 eating dinner with everybody. We negotiated what that looked like for the stage of life we were in, for the work we had.

Across the board, each individual interviewed indicated that they started with one particular paradigm and definition of what work/family balance looked like for them and ended with a very different one due to the simple fact that they had a “mirror” of sorts for the impact their work-related decisions had.

To reinforce the notion of mirroring, many of the individuals interviewed described the impact of positive and negative role models on how they made work/family balance related decisions. The role models discussed ranged from family members to professional colleagues. Interestingly enough many of the role

modeling stories shared did not describe the impact that the role model's decisions had on their own life, rather on the lives of those around them (which aligns with the men interviewed for this study's perceptions of balance as well). Specifically, Administrator 3 shared his perspectives on watching his father's work ethic:

You know, the truth is...growing up, my dad worked 60 hours a week as a logistics person for Staley's, which they would ship corn syrup all over the world and all over the country in trains. So my dad would work from . . . you know, he'd go to work at 7:00 and come home at 6:00 at night, eat dinner, set up a table, and just work until 11:00 at night. And I can remember . . . and he would die if he heard me say this . . . I mean I can remember just feeling so left out because he always would work. He would never watch TV, he would never go play baseball, he would never just hang out – he was always working. And so I told myself at a young age I would never be like that.

Interestingly, the men interviewed were only able to share negative observations on male professional role models. Administrator 1 shared a story of a professional supervisor who clearly prioritized work over everything else by saying sarcastically, "I expect you to do this, but if you can find the time, take it off" with a chuckle. Administrator Four described the relationship he had with a former supervisor with marital issues due to his professional career:

<He>struggled with that – his home situation, he would advise me and give me some advice when I get married and be careful with this and that. And I

think that's where I got the idea of just listening to them to say I'm gonna commit to some things at home and just say if I gotta miss an event, I'll miss an event, and be able to live with that, but the other nights I'm gonna be available. So I got that idea from them, just watching them. But those other nights, I could be here until 8-9-10 o'clock, but on the nights I'm supposed to be home, I'm dutiful about that.

Administrator 4 also indicated that the previously mentioned administrator's struggles with work/family balance were in stark contrast to a female administrator whom he worked with. He said, specifically, that the female administrator had no difficulties in clearly defining the boundaries between home and work.

The individuals interviewed were also able to share stories of positive role models as well. Administrator Six indicated that his current supervisor (female) was an excellent role model for balance in the profession. Similarly, Administrator Seven shared his perspectives on striving to model his work/balance perspectives based on the example his parents set for him:

My parents were always really good at balance. It's interesting, looking back, my mom was a stay-at-home mom, and so she was always home with us. I feel like my dad maintained pretty good balance. He owned his own business, and so he had somewhat of a flexible schedule. I felt like he was around, and he was there for us, and so that was definitely a positive role model.

However, Administrator 6 indicated that it was challenging for him to find a role model he could truly look up to, simply because a majority of the people in his office have children, and therefore have a reason (according to his department) to seek out some level of balance:

There are a couple program coordinators in my office who I really look at as role models as far as balance. The only thing is, for me what's really difficult is finding a role model who has balance who doesn't have children. The program coordinators both have children.

Administrator Six went on to discuss the fact that there were still lessons to be learned from the individuals with children that he could apply to his daily decision making processes, however it was difficult for him to take lessons that he could directly apply to his life, because of his lack of children, and his department's emphasis on children being a sole and key reason behind the necessity for a healthy work/family balance.

The key takeaway from this particular theme is that each of these men derived their own definition of work/family balance over time. In this case, these definitions are not monolithic and able to be defined or even influenced solely by generation or marital status; rather the definitions were emergent based on the life status of the individual in question. Each of the men interviewed for this dissertation described a process driven approach, both to defining boundaries and day to day decision making.

Theme 3: Work Environment

The nature of the field of student affairs has long been considered prohibitive to practitioners maintaining a healthy level of work/family balance (Manning, 2001). The individuals interviewed for this dissertation echoed that sentiment from a variety of perspectives. The following theme will discuss several of the elements related to the profession discussed by the men interviewed.

Subtheme 1: Organizational Culture

Each of the practitioners interviewed indicated that organizational culture impacted their ability to successfully (and sometimes unsuccessfully) make effective decisions for work/family balance. In some situations, the culture was viewed as a positive influence on the practitioner's ability to maintain a level of balance. Administrator One left a large public institution to be the chief student affairs officer at a smaller, faith based, private institution, and found a great deal of success and satisfaction in the values and parameters the university used to make decisions. Similarly, Administrator Four left a medium sized public institution in the middle of a large urban area, for a larger land grant institution in a traditional college town. He too found that the culture at his new institution was significantly different, and allowed him more freedom to attend to his family:

Yeah, at <my former institution>, we did have a lot of people that stayed well beyond 5:00, just very engaged student body and administrative staff. At <my current institution>, you better get out the way before 5:00, because if you're standing in the doorway, you're gonna get run over. I thought it was

just the summertime, but it's like that throughout the fall as well. And it's the people who have to stay, stay, and the people who don't have to stay, don't think twice about getting out of here and going home.

The fluid nature of organizational culture was also defined as a constraining or negative factor in individuals' ability to maintain a healthy level of balance with minimal overlap. Administrator 7 described a significant shift in how his current institution addressed issues related to work/family balance, and how they impacted his own mental and emotional wellness:

Coming to (name of institution), again, initially, for my first year here, there was this culture of balance. And maybe it wasn't so much that there was, but there was more of a culture than there was at Indiana. And so we had a little bit coming from nothing – so it seems like a lot. And so it felt a lot more refreshing. I felt like they cared about your family, your home life, this other role, and “We recognize that other role. And we even proactively talk about that other role in the workplace. We don't ask you to leave that at home – we bring it in. We love when your kids and wife come by at the workplace. We love when you tell us stories about what's going on at home. We love when you intertwine those things.”

And then that kind of disappeared. We had a major shift in our office where we combined two offices, the staff doubled in size. We got a new director, and we all got new supervisors, and in that shift that disappeared. There was less of this talk about family, less intertwining of the two roles,

and more of this kind of when you're at work, you're at work, and we're just gonna talk about work. It wasn't specifically said, it was more implied, "When you're at work, let's focus on the students. When you're at home, then you can focus on your home life." And again, it's not about hours, as you know, it's about this intertwining, that when you asked me to separate out that major role in my life, that's when the exhaustion or lack of energy or emotional draining comes in.

Administrators 2 and 5 (both working in a University Housing function) also indicated that there was a subculture of sorts within the field of Housing, attributable to the significant overlap of work/home within live-in positions. Administrator 2 specifically said that based on his experience, the culture of university housing was more impactful on his overall decision making process and ability to set effective boundaries between home and work than the culture of his individual institution.

Differences between public and private institutions were also mentioned by the chief student affairs officers interviewed for this dissertation, with the indication that private institutions provided more flexibility to make decisions. Both Administrators 1 and 3 indicated that this level of flexibility allowed them the opportunity to say "no" to additional institutional responsibilities.

Private school, hey, we're mission-centric. If we don't want a group on this campus that's not in alignment with our mission, we can tell them that. We don't typically – what we tell them is that you're invited to come onto our

campus as a visitor, but we're not gonna have you dictate to us that you wanna have a program here, that you wanna set up for free speech, or any of that. When you're a private school, you don't have to do that. So I think that's a huge difference. Public schools, if you let one person on your campus, you gotta let everybody when it comes to free speech, more or less.

Administrator 3 indicated that he preferred the decision making processes of private institutions:

Huge differences. I'm at a public institution that has a very private feel right now. Well, I'm gonna see how that . . . I think that's gonna be the best of both worlds. But the truth is, I operate better in the private sector. And the difference is, you don't have to deal with state regulations. You don't have to worry about funding guidelines. I mean you basically do whatever you wanna do, as long as the board of trustees is okay with it.

Environmental contexts proved to be a significant factor in influencing the individual practitioners' ability to effectively manage borders between work and home. Simply put, an abundance of organizational support led to the ability for the individual practitioners to practice a healthy level of work family balance. A void of such organizational support led to the direct opposite.

Subtheme 2: Boundary Control

Theme 1 (Boundary Definition) described the factors individuals used to effectively define the boundaries between work and home. Specifically mentioned were personal values, and commitments to children and spouses/partners.

However, the individuals interviewed for this dissertation indicated that the lack of control over structural elements of their positions (job expectations, organizational meetings, university events) significantly impacted their ability to maintain healthy levels of balance, despite the commitments they have to family members.

Each of the individuals interviewed indicated a certain level of seasonality to their work. For the chief student affairs officers, many mentioned football season as a time where they faced high levels of overlap and role stress. Other practitioners mentioned the first 2-3 weeks of the new academic year as being particularly busy with evening and weekend events.

However, beyond the seasonal nature of student affairs, the individuals interviewed expressed a significant lack of control, both institutional and individual, over their ability to effectively manage their schedules in a way that encouraged and allowed for a level of personal balance. When Administrator 4 was asked why he was unable to have a consistent schedule of evening's home with his wife and child, he responded with the following:

One of the holdbacks . . . so the groups that want me to participate in something, the only night they meet is Monday or Wednesday, and those happen to be the two nights that I'm committing to be at home. And if I switched it to Tuesday night, then there's another group who wants me to come Tuesday. Now it's not every Monday or every Tuesday, but they're saying, "We want you to come by and say hi to our group and share your vision for the division of student affairs, but we meet on Monday night." So

either I say no to that invitation, or I say yes and call my wife and see if we can make another arrangement. But they don't call me the day of – they plan it in advance for us to get together and do it, so I wanna be able to commit to those. But if I'm gonna be the vice-president of student affairs and people just want me to come – especially the first 6-8 weeks of the semester, there's so many groups, so many new students that just wanna say hi, or just want me to come in and say hi. So they want me to do that, and Monday is the day they have class, so it's tough for me to turn that down when I know this is the only opportunity for them to meet.

Similarly, other practitioners mentioned student meetings as a key challenge in managing their schedules. However, many also mentioned a lack of flexibility by their employing departments as a significant barrier in their ability to effectively manage their personal lives. Administrators 2 and 5, being university housing employees, mentioned the on-call process as being challenging, but Administrator 6 mentioned that inflexibility in overall departmental philosophies resulted in a higher level of emotional exhaustion on his part:

I'll give you an example – at the end of the spring semester, we have a big international festival, if you will, that's on a Saturday. The Saturday that it ends up being on is at the end of a week's worth of programs that service programs does. And so I'm going from literally Monday morning through Saturday, which we usually have our last program on Saturday morning, and then Saturday afternoon is this festival, and I have to be there the entire

festival, and we're done cleaning up at around 11:30 at night. Everybody in our office is required to be at the festival, but not required to be at any of the programs that I do during that week. It's one of my favorite programs that we do, but it's also the lack of understanding that I haven't been home most of this week, and now you're saying I can't go home on Saturday until the program is done.

Additionally many of the administrators interviewed mentioned the fact that their departments supported a "flex" schedule, where they were allowed to take time off (meaning come in late a following morning) if they were working late in the evening. However, the administrators also mentioned that this proves to be difficult, in that, although they might be coming in late the following morning, they've still missed time with their spouses/partners and children—who are unable to take off that same time.

All of the individuals interviewed for this dissertation were asked about the use of technology, specifically cell phones and remote email access, and how it affected their ability to effectively manage their boundaries. All practitioners expressed that at one point in time they struggled with it, but all also indicated that they all, at some point, were overwhelmed with the pressure associated with being constantly available, and made the decision to not have their email available at all times. Administrator 7 sought to proactively create a standard by not purchasing a cell phone:

Yeah, I'm glad you asked – that's a great question – because when I came to <current institution> – this is gonna sound crazy in this day and age – but we actually intentionally canceled our cell phone service. In grad school I had a cell phone, obviously. And I did not like how people could get ahold of me when they needed me – that bothered me. And because of the culture that I already mentioned at <former institution> where there was no balance, I felt like there's really one way to do this – it's to go into this new job, and when we moved here, we cancelled our cell phone service, partially to save some money, but more importantly – and this is the honest truth – is that I knew that it would be a great way to start off by saying I'm gonna take control of my own balance, and my “me” time. And so for the first year on the job here, for an entire year, I did not have a cell phone at all. And I made it a practice of never checking my email at home. And I shared that with my supervisor, and she was very supportive of it. And I just said, “Hey, if you wanna pay me more, then sure I'll pay for a cellphone contract.” I blamed it on we can't afford a cell phone contract, we're just trying to cut back. But the honest truth of it was, I said to myself and my wife, because if people can get a hold of me whenever they want, I feel like I have to call them back, especially if it's a boss or supervisor.

However, over time, due to personal family related reasons, he ended up purchasing a cell phone, committing to making sure that he used it minimally for after-hours related work. However, this brought up a unique situation with his

department and supervisor. He had taken a day off of work to spend time with his family, but had incorrectly filled out his leave request. After returning to work, he was confronted by his supervisor, who share departmental expectations that, regardless of time off, he was expected to return text messages and phone calls—that when a director attempts to get in contact, it is not an option to ignore the message, regardless of context. The office explicitly stated that individuals were *expected* to be accessible via phone at all times:

And it was kinda this crazy dialogue, but the long and short of it was, they wrapped it up saying, “Well, look, I understand you’re at a movie with your kids, but you need to get back in touch with the director when the director texts you. It’s an expectation in our office that if you get a text or call from us after hours, you need to return that phone call.” ... That was the expectation that was stated based on this. So I pushed back on that because, you know, again, I’m very values-driven. I said, “Well, I understand that – I just don’t feel like this was something that you needed to get in touch with me about.” To be honest with you, Shailen, this was more of a buildup of a lack of balance. So I had been feeling a lack of balance since January by this point, and this conversation was taking place in the summer. So the pushback for me wasn’t so much that I was so burned that a director texted me and expected me to text him back – it was more a buildup of six months’ worth of imbalance, six months of, “Hey, we want you give your all to this job, but we’re not gonna give any credence to you going out and spending time with

your family or taking some time for yourself or recharging or whatever it is.”

So that’s where my pushback really came from with it.

In short, the individuals interviewed for this dissertation were going through their own process of negotiating and renegotiating the boundaries between work and home individually. However, that process takes place within a larger process driven by the standards and culture of their work environment. The two processes often conflict, leading to high levels of imbalance and practitioner stress.

Subtheme 3: Organizational Structure

Based on the information gathered from the individual interviews, and in reviewing the organizational structural charts provided by the interviewees, the ability to control organizational structure also plays a fairly significant role in individual practitioners’ ability to effectively balance their responsibilities. The chief student affairs officers discussed how the ability to effectively delegate responsibilities—specifically being present at events positively affected their ability to manage their time. Administrator 1 stated:

So I’ve worked very hard since I’ve come here to make sure that my dean’s team I’ve got four deans that are my senior leadership team – and I’m working to empower them to work at their optimal level so that I don’t have to do everything. It was a bit of a VP-centric division when I got here. And I’m not knocking it – it’s just what it was. And I’ve tried to diffuse the leadership model more so that the deans can be making the decisions they

need to make, going to the events that they need to be going to. And yes, I need to go to certain events, I need to be present, but I can be more intentional in working with them about what I need to be going to and what I don't need to be going to.

Similarly, Administrator 4 described his own goals in trying to diffuse leadership, to allow for fewer time commitments on his part:

Now one of the things that could help me do this is, I don't have a dean of students role here. So there's a VP and then all my directors. I have an assistant vice-president which takes a lot of the load off me. But that role that's typically dean of students, more doing some of that social networking with students, we don't have that here. And I think that would . . . a role like that where students saw this person as the primary go to student person, that would relieve a lot of stress and guilt and pressure from me trying to show up at everything as the main representative for students.

However, for the mid-level managers interviewed for this survey, this diffused level of leadership can often lead to additional time commitments. Administrator 6 provided a description of what the impact of such a diffused leadership structure was on his ability to effectively maintain a level of balance:

And so there's certain things, like our division is broken up into small clusters, and we have cluster meetings on Fridays. Well, I also have a program typically on Friday afternoon, but unless literally I'm sick, I can't miss a Friday if there's a cluster meeting. And we have those once or twice a

month, and so that's something too, that it's like that would be a great time to make up my time, but it's not necessarily on my terms.

Based on a review of the organizational charts provided, it seems obvious that those with control over the chart itself—meaning ability to delegate responsibilities, have more freedom and flexibility in their day to day decision making. However, those same individuals still have to deal with higher level responsibilities (as indicated by the quote regarding football season presented earlier). However, the fundamental ability to *control* or *influence* the environment around them significantly impacted the individuals' perceptions of balance. This was also reiterated through the notion of supervisory relationships. Seemingly, those with positive supervisory relationships had positive perspectives on their ability to balance their responsibilities and effectively manage the boundaries associated with their work/home life. Those with negative relationship with their supervisor (past or present) demonstrated otherwise.

Those with positive relationships with their supervisors felt as such based on a level of control they had over their environment. Administrator 2 indicated that his supervisor trusts him to make effective decisions, therefore when he needs to take time off, there are no questions asked. Administrator 5 discussed his desire to not be constantly accessible via email, and his supervisor's response:

I made the conscious decision to take it off and keep it off. There wasn't ever a conversation. I think that if there was any conversation that I had with [supervisor name], it was like, "Hey, [supervisor name], I took my email off

my phone,” and he’s like, “Good job, I’m glad that you’re finding that balance.” Like nobody was upset that I took it off, and I think people understood that it was a personal decision – I had to take a step back.

That simple ability to control an element of his job environment had a significant impact on his perspectives of work/family balance. Additionally, Administrator 7 indicates that often times it’s simply the fact of knowing that someone cares about his welfare that makes a significant difference in his emotional wellness related to work/family balance

The ironic thing, and the thing that I’m working with my supervisor, and that I’ve always in my 2 years of being in student affairs have tried to push, is that it’s not about I need a day off, but it’s about I need a supervisor or staff around me that are proactively showing compassion or care and saying, “Wow, you’re doing a lot – are you taking enough time for your family?” And it’s like something as simple as that, for some reason – I don’t know if it’s psychologically – but it gives me energy and makes me think that people around me care that I have a good home life that therefore gives me energy when I return home.

Conversely, Administrator 6 indicated that high levels of turnover in his position have left him with supervisors who both were and weren’t supportive of his ability to achieve levels of balance. Additionally, supervisors who were supportive of him having a level of balance did not necessarily demonstrate those same levels for themselves, leaving him conflicted as to how he should operate:

I actually have an interim supervisor who, when it comes to balance, she's always pushing me to make sure that, if I'm working late, that I take some time for myself. And it's funny – and she's been the best at that. The supervisor that I had the longest was pretty decent at it. But part of the problem too, was that she wasn't a great model of it. And so it's hard to listen to her say, "You need to go home," but then she would still be at work. That's one of those things where it's hard for me to say, "Okay, yeah, I'm gonna do that, but you're not doing that." So it feels like that's not maybe the right way to do it.

In short, the structural elements of the organization have a significant impact in how the individuals are able to effectively manage their day to day decision making processes in relation to work/family balance. The ability to control their surrounds, with a level of support from a supervisor can have a positive impact on practitioner wellness, and overall ability to manage situations of overlap. This resonates with the earlier notion that boundary definitions/crossing are more emotional in nature than anything else. They are based on relationships with spouses/partners, children, and other people of value to the individual.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter discussed the findings from this study. In all, three themes including seven subthemes were identified as being prevalent throughout the data analysis process. In essence, the men interviewed for this dissertation are involved in a complex process of negotiating and renegotiating the demands on their time,

and the impact those demands have on their relationships. This process results in an ever evolving definition of personal balance, and boundaries that ebbs and flows as the individual moves in to different phases of their life. All of this takes place within the often rigid and immovable constraints of the organization they are working within—however, the level to which the boundaries between work and home are permeable—from a values perspective (as opposed to a temporal perspective), can directly impact the ability to which individuals are able to effectively manage their home and work responsibilities in a personally satisfying manner.

The final chapter of this dissertation will further explore the issues discussed in Chapter IV. The chapter will also review the information received through the interview process through the literature review detailed in chapter II. Lastly the following chapter will discuss contributions of this study to the field of HRD, and possible future research needs based information found, and not found within this study.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The intent of this study is to examine workplace family demands among male student affairs practitioners, specifically through the lens of Sue Campbell Clarks' (2000) work/family border theory. The field of student affairs has been marked by high levels of workaholism, long hours, and environments that can contribute negatively to practitioner mental and physical health (Ward, 1995; Manning, 2001).

Men specifically were chosen for a variety of reasons. Research indicates that men have a more difficult time dealing with long work hours (Keene & Quadagno, 2004), as well as the emotional strain of having to manage boundaries between work and home (Krouse & Affifi, 2007). Furthermore, current research focuses mainly on women's perspectives of work/family balance, and disregards the high level of responsibility many men are taking in child rearing and other family related activities (Emslie & Hunt, 2009).

The theoretical framework used for this dissertation was Clark's (2000) Work/Family Border Theory. Clark posits that a healthy work/family balance should not solely be focused on temporal constraints, rather it should also consider issues of role overlap—where the individual feels conflict between the variety of roles they play on a daily basis (spouse, partner, employee, etc.). This theory aligned well with information derived from current research both on the challenges

related to work/family balance from a student affairs perspective, as well as from the male perspective. The two specific research questions focused on were:

- 1) How do men define and navigate through the boundaries between work and home?
- 2) Are there any predictive values (generational issues, gender roles etc.) that have a significant impact on the manner in which men make balance/boundary related decisions?

A qualitative case study approach was used to further research this issue. Individuals from a variety of positions, years of services, and marital statuses were recruited to provide their perspectives on the issue of work/family balance through semi structured interviews. Individuals were also asked for their job descriptions and organizational charts to better understand the role and function of the individual within the organization as well.

Aside from the normal limitations associated with a qualitative study, this study was limited by its research focus (men in student affairs only). Furthermore, the study was limited to 7 individuals, and interviews were conducted at roughly the same time of the year.

The following chapter will provide an overview of the results and conclusions from the research conducted. Furthermore, the limitations of the study will be discussed. Lastly, areas for future research will be provided.

Summary of Results

The present study focused on issues related to the male perspective of work/family balance. Analyses indicated that men tend to have an emergent definition of work/family balance—developed through constant negotiation, and renegotiation of border issues as defined by relationships with spouses/partners, children and other family members.

In response to research question one all determined their definition of balance in relationship to their spouse/partner-which also provides an understanding of research question two by indicating that marital and parental status are, in fact, predictive values by which individuals define and navigate boundary related issues. All participants went through a process of boundary exploration, meaning a “push/pull process” where they defined the parameters of their relationship based on the reactions of their spouses/partners and children. Based on these reactions, the individuals developed their own boundary definitions, and in the philosophies that inform those definitions as well. From that perspective, it makes sense that the men with more career experience are able to take a proactive stance to boundary definition, simply because of the fact that they’ve experienced this “push/pull” process. Additionally, based on this reactive/emergent definition of work/family balance, it also stands to reason that those individuals with success of intentional boundary overlap would seek out ways to continue overlapping their domains. Lastly, many of these individuals were also able to abstractly start the process of boundary formation through the

observation of professional and peer role models—but even those examples mainly to the consequences defined by relationships.

Furthermore this process of determining boundary definitions in relationship to spouses/partners and other family members resulted in emotional consequences of boundary overlap. For the most part, individuals interviewed for this dissertation defined imbalance in terms of guilt, anger, and resentment instead of physical exhaustion. Furthermore, often times, the emotions associated with boundary overlap were as a result of and in reaction to the emotions of their loved ones. This aligns well with Cinamon & Rich's (2002) notion that emotions associated with work/family imbalance are centralized to the person and dependent on the relationships they carry.

Much of the data in response to research question two focused on the nature of the individual's professional environment. Generational issues/values were not found as a significant contributor to the ability/inability to effectively maintain and navigate work/life boundaries. However the organizations, in which the individuals were working, made a significant difference to the level of balance individuals felt. The ability to control the work environment—including ability to delegate tasks, and control their day to day schedule—resulted in positive impressions of work/family balance. However, several of the individuals interviewed felt that an inability to control their day to day job schedules negatively impacted their ability to feel any level of work/family balance. This lack of control almost resulted in the individuals feeling like victims of their job environments. The individuals surveyed

cited workplace culture, inability to exercise control over meeting schedules, and the ineffectiveness of “flex” scheduling as main sources of conflict in their ability to maintain any sort of work/family balance. These perspectives align well with Grzywacz and Carlson and Carlson’s (2007) perspectives. These authors indicate that balance must be looked at from contextual basis, meaning environmental constructs must be considered. For the men interviewed in this dissertation, environmental constructs range from family status to organizational culture.

Discussion of Results

This data collected and analyzed in this study align with the information provided in the literature review of Chapter II. From an HRD perspective, many alarming issues were raised, specifically related to the concepts of career development and organizational culture. McDonald and Hite (2005) indicated that career development has become more of an individual process, as opposed to an organizational one. Specifically the authors indicated that individuals are weighing out financial compensation with issues related to work/family balance equally in making career related decisions. This aligns with the content found through this research process—specifically administrators with less experience going through a questioning process to determine whether the profession of student affairs as a whole was the “right” one for them, based on the conflicts they feel due to constraints of job requirements. Two of the administrators indicated that a lack of balance might possibly lead them to choosing other professions, which according to McDonald & Hite, is a byproduct of the individualized decision making processes

practitioners go through—essentially the question “is this worth it?” becomes a critical part of the career development process. This notion aligns well with Bender’s (2009) perspectives, that individuals at the beginning of their careers feel the most dissatisfied with their careers due to a lack of decision making ability as well as overall perceived lack of control over their day to day schedules as well.

Additionally, several authors (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Martins, Eddleston & Vega, 2002, Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2002) have indicated that an individual’s ability to bring their whole self to the office—defined as the ability to come to work without issues related to the variety of roles they play in their life—find a higher level of satisfaction and organizational commitment. This was illustrated specifically through the concept of intentional overlap. Many of the practitioners interviewed for this dissertation were seeking ways to minimize their levels of role conflict by integrating their home and personal lives by intentionally overlapping their time, by talking about their family members, or involving spouses/partners and children. In doing so, the individuals were able to find a deeper connection to their work, which led to a higher level of motivation.

Simply put, individuals feel more connected, and more motivated to work when they feel lower levels of role conflict and imbalance. This can be mitigated from an organizational perspective through effective supervisor relationships, or simply asking individuals about their personal lives (as indicated by the response of administrator 7). These issues of individual practitioner motivation can, and do directly impact the overall levels of organizational productivity, and should

therefore be on the forefront of HRD scholars and practitioners minds. The individuals represented in this dissertation present an evolving, fluid definition of balance, defined by the constant negotiation and renegotiation of boundaries. “One size fits all” methods for encouraging balance cannot be successfully applied in organizational settings.

Temporal constraints were often listed as key mitigating factor leading to a higher level of imbalance, resulting in immediate negative feedback when temporal constraints/boundaries are violated due to additional work responsibilities. Furthermore, the notion that men have a difficult time creating and sustaining work/family borders also resonates with the notion that men experience an emergent definition of boundary definition that is constantly evolving based on their situation and status in life. Additionally, the research within this dissertation further indicates that balance and work/family border related issues are not monolithic, and are therefore must be analyzed from an individual perspective. This notion is revealed in two ways. First, current research on work/family balance has been characterized homogenized gender views (Halrynjo, 2009), and doesn’t take into consideration the often evolving definition of gender roles, including spousal relationships and involvement in child rearing. The men interviewed for this dissertation all revealed a wide variety of ways in which they were involved in their families and with their spouses/partners—the roles were not defined based on a specific definition, rather based on the values and context of their individual relationships.

Secondly, the individual definitions of work/family balance tended not to be influenced by generational issues. Seemingly the individuals interviewed for this dissertation shared the same ethic and philosophy towards their work, however the key differences arose when the individuals were faced with decisions regarding their family members. Authors have indicated that millennial generation members and generation x members as subscribing to the “work to live” philosophy, whereas earlier generations tended to “live to work” (Kunreuther, 2003; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Howe & Strauss, 2000). However, this did not align with the perspective of the individuals interviewed for this study.

On the other hand, Kunreuther (2003) also indicated that Generation X, and Millennial individuals would face challenges related to the time commitments associated with their profession. Specifically, the author indicated,

Several of the younger people we interviewed, especially the young men, were locked in a struggle between their work, which they felt required enormous time and commitment, and their desire to have and be involved with their children in ways that meant spending fewer hours on the job” (p. 454)

This notion aligned well with the perspectives of the men interviewed for this study. Individuals, who fit into the Millennial and Generation X category did share concerns about whether this profession was right for them, given the time commitment, and the inability to focus on other areas of their life. Additionally,

research has indicated that Baby Boomer simply accept some level of overlap as part of their day to day routine. This was, in some way, confirmed by the interviews conducted for this dissertation. The individual fitting into the Baby Boomer, and other individuals who fit into the tail end of the Baby Boomer/Generation X crossover category did acknowledge that some level of overlap was necessary in their particular chosen profession—however their perspectives also come as a result of several boundary defining experiences (children, spouse, partner etc.), in which they did express doubt about their chosen profession, as opposed to the younger individuals still being in the middle of defining their boundaries between work and home.

Lastly, the perspectives shared in this dissertation also align well with the research conducted on work/family balance in the profession of student affairs. Manning (2001) described the relationship that many student affairs practitioners enter into with their profession as being “co-dependent” in that individuals feel that only they can come up with solutions to issues arising within their position. This was, in some sense, present in the individuals interviewed, however what was more alarming was the organizational influence leading individuals to lose sight of themselves, and their own personal goals, in order to ensure that collective departmental events happened as they should.

Furthermore, Ward (1995) indicated that an increased amount of hours resulted in a level of “dissonance” for practitioners between individual and organizational goals, and this certainly aligned with the interviews conducted

within this study. Bailyn (1997) cited three elements of a supportive work environment as:

- 1) Temporal Flexibility: the ability to set individualized work schedules
- 2) Operational Flexibility: the ability to control the conditions of work, specifically the ability to do so without restrictions
- 3) Supportive Supervision: organization's supportiveness for individuals with family responsibilities

Several authors (Berwick, 1992; Jo, 2008; Ward, 1995) have indicated that a lack of these three elements lead to higher levels of academic practitioner related stress, and this too was confirmed by perspectives shared. Those with the ability to control elements 1 and 2 felt a higher level of work/family balance—in that they felt in the “driver’s seat” of their day to day schedule. However those on the other side of that spectrum—feeling as if they have no control of their schedule—felt the direct opposite and felt a high level of stress related to their position. Lastly, as indicated earlier, supportive supervision made a significant difference in whether people felt balanced or imbalanced. Two of the more negative interviews conducted for this dissertation focused on a lack of all three of Bailyn’s elements as key reasons behind their frustration with their chosen positions and professions.

Lastly, several authors (Berwick, 1992; Palmer, Murphy, Peck-Parrott, & Steinke, 2001; Ward, 1995) have indicated a combination of increased work hours, role conflict (defined by times where individual roles are not clearly defined, or

when roles conflict with other responsibilities both in and out of the workplace), can lead to higher levels of work related stress, ultimately resulting in a level of practitioner burnout. Additionally, Anderson, Guido-DiBrito, and Morrell (2000) indicate that excessive work, constant change in workplace, and a lack of overall time (both personal and time for professional endeavors) contribute significantly to a lack of satisfaction in student affairs practitioners. For the individuals interviewed in this dissertation (especially those at the beginning of their career), long hours leading to high levels of role conflict were the specific factors leading to burnout, and to an eventual decision making process as to whether student affairs is the “right” profession for them. Furthermore, significant information was shared on the concept of an emergent job description—meaning good work was rewarded by more work, ultimately leading to practitioners being responsible for, and being held accountable to, responsibilities outside of their previous job description. This concept specifically illustrates the notion of professional roles not being clearly defined leading to additional practitioner stress.

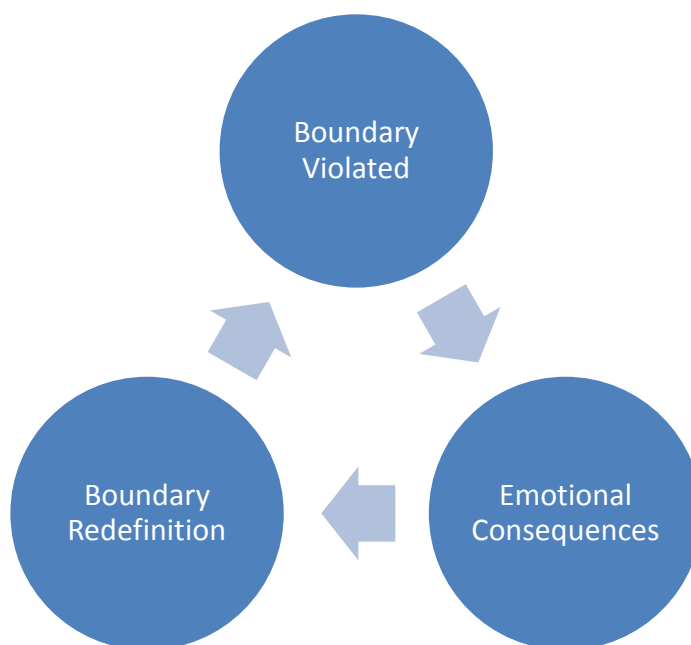
This study does indicate a new paradigm of how individuals define work family balance. The study indicates that men experience an emergent and evolving definition based on a variety of factors in life—that instead of determining “what” an individual’s definition of work/family balance is, practitioners and researchers alike should be focusing on “how” that definition is formed. This new paradigm will be discussed in the next section.

Emergent Conceptual Framework

In addition to providing additional application and specifics to Clark's theory, this study also points to a new conceptual framework: an emergent, individualized, and constantly evolving definition of work/family balance from the male perspective. In essence, this study theorizes that men experience an evolving definition of work/family balance, depending on a variety of personal factors, including marital/parental status and work environment. Boundaries and definitions of work/family balance are not , and should not be considered rigid and unmoving. Rather they are fluid and dependent on the situation and paradigm by which the individual is making decisions. Values, relationships, and the individual's manner of making meaning of their day to day interactions with their environment all play a significant role in how balance is perceived, and therefore "one size fits all" definitions and perspectives on balance are too simple, and do not provide the necessary depth to accurately and adequately define male experiences related to work/family balance.

Additionally this new model of work/family balance indicates that men experience a cyclical pattern of balance paradigmatic changes. Men set boundaries between work and home, unintentionally violate them, face emotional consequences (defined by their relationships to loved ones) from the violations, and then redefine their boundaries based on a desire to not repeat the violations/stress caused to their loved ones, as defined by Figure 2:

Figure 2: Cycle of Boundary Definition



This cycle demonstrates an evolving definition of work family balance for men, one that is representative of the individuals marital/parental status, as well as the constantly changing relationships individuals have with both their work and home life. The cycle is non-static, and evolves based on a constantly shifting paradigm. This new conceptual framework leads practitioners and researchers alike to focus less on the definition of work/family borders that men have, and more on how the men defined them, and how those definitions evolve on a day to day basis.

The conclusions above were derived specifically from this study, however given the overall understanding of emergent nature of work/family balance definitions, especially from the male perspective, additional research should be

conducted in order to fully understand this issue, and its impact on Human Resource Development, as well as the field of Student Affairs. Some of these future areas of research will be addressed in the next section.

Implications for Future Research

Through this research process, a wide variety of areas for future research arose. First and foremost, authors have indicated that women have an easier time dealing with temporal constraints, as well as setting and maintaining consistent boundaries between work and home (Milkie & Petola, 1999; Keene & Quadagno, 2004). An obvious area for future research would be to design a qualitative study to understand the differences in how men and women navigate through similar situations of work/family balance. This study indicated that men go through an emergent process of developing boundaries, however, that might not necessarily apply to the methods by which women determine their boundaries between work and family.

Furthermore, the individuals were questioned regarding the use of technology in their day to day processes of managing the boundaries between home and work. Each of the individuals indicated that they were able to use technology in a productive manner, however the notion of individuals as boundary crossers (as described by Clark's theory) begs the question of whether or not technology, in the form of home offices, and 24/7 availability of email correspondence, is a help or a hindrance in an individual's ability to effectively manage the borders between home and work. This study could certainly be

conducted in positions where boundary definition is more difficult due to long hours, or other positional driven stressors (such as those described by the practitioners interviewed in this study) however it could also apply to those who telecommute, or are involved in travel intensive onsite consulting jobs as well.

Additional research could also be piloted to determine the impact of organizational culture on work/family balance. From a practical perspective, organizations have structures currently in place (such as flex scheduling) that are intended to provide individuals with some level of flexibility when it comes to dealing with temporal constraints. However, as indicated in this dissertation, a “make up” system for dealing with long hours is not always effective, and often times the organizational culture influences individuals to make short term decisions regarding day to day choices with long term consequences. Additionally, environmental constructs and messages often reinforce unhealthy behaviors in an unintended fashion for the organization. Seemingly, organizations would value the mental and physical health of their employees, but the messages they send may not be in congruence with those particular goals. Therefore, a more in depth qualitative research agenda regarding workplace culture and its impact on balance could prove remarkably helpful to the body of HRD literature.

Furthermore, the impact of role modeling on the development of work ethic/values was prevalent throughout the research conducted for this dissertation. Seemingly, each of the individuals involved with this study were impacted in some way, either positively or negatively, through observational learning from former

supervisors, parents, or other individuals. This learning process resulted in many of the individuals being able to better deal with their own day to day decision making processes, simply because they had already seen the consequences (again, either positive or negative) of someone else's actions. Informal and observational learning plays a significant role in the field of adult learning as well as training and development (Swanson & Holton, 2001), and this area could provide deeper understanding on issues related both to employee development, and work/family balance.

The individuals interviewed for this study were also asked about the accuracy of their job descriptions as compared to what they do on a regular basis. Research has indicated that incongruence between expectations of a job, and the actual job performed can result in higher practitioner stress (Berwick, 1992; Ward, 1995). This incongruence between job performed and job expectations did not prove to be a significant stressor for the individuals interviewed, however, many of them detailed an emergent process of increased job responsibility—meaning good work was rewarded with more work. This in turn resulted in their positions being more catered to them as an individual, instead of a general position description, which ultimately reinforces the codependent relationship paradigm as described by Manning (2001). Additional research should be conducted to further understand the nature of emergent job descriptions and the impact they have on individual paradigms of job performance and personal balance.

Additionally, the three individuals with more than 10 years of experience (and at the top of their organizations) expressed that their time working on their doctoral degrees, while working full time, as being a significant stressor in their lives. Specifically, the pressure associated with finishing the degree in order to progress in their careers and effectively provide for their families was mentioned as an area of deep concern and frustration. This concept aligns well with the notion that student affairs practitioners typically have an increased amount of personal ambition (McDonald & Hite, 2008), and a terminal degree is often necessary in order to progress towards higher level administrative positions. The time commitment associated with working on a terminal degree part time, while still maintaining a full time position—and the promise of future rewards, both positional and financial, creates a unique tension for administrators to navigate through.

Lastly, it was also interesting to note that for the three individuals at the top of their professions and divisions, each of the three had a wife who did not work, meaning they were able to dedicate their full attention to child rearing. The individuals discussed that their wives careers revolved around the different positions the men took in their career. This certainly raises the question as to whether or not socio-economic factors play a role in individuals ability to both attain and maintain a chief student affairs officer position.

The most significant takeaway from this study is that men think through the concept of work/family balance on an individualized, evolving basis. Their

definitions of boundaries and balance are specific to them based on their family status and personal values. Therefore “one size fits all” methods of encouraging balance or regulating work schedules are often not sufficient or effective., simply because the individual’s perspectives change and evolve based on their interactions with their environment. Organizations must understand the individualized perspectives that each person brings to the workplace, and deal with them effectively through supportive supervision and flexible work structures that allow for individuals to still maintain mental and physical health, while being held accountable to workplace standards.

Furthermore, this study should encourage HRD practitioners to further examine the impact of self-efficacy and motivation on overall individual performance. Several authors (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Martins, Eddleston & Veiga, 2002) have indicated that an employee’s ability to bring their “whole self” to the office can significantly improve their output, thus improving overall organizational performance. However, in order for employees to do so, some consideration must be given to the stressors and pressure they are facing in *all* facets of their life.

Implications for Future Practice

From a practical perspective, leaders of student affairs organizations should understand the personalized nature of work/family balance related issues, and implement strategies that allow for high levels of flexibility. These strategies can

include, but are not limited to, flexible scheduling, and formalized methods of accruing additional vacation, based on additional hours worked during the week.

Additionally, issues related to work/family balance should be included in practitioner preparation programs. Future student affairs practitioners should be provided with a variety of viewpoints on the issue, and should be given the opportunity to start the process of developing the values by which they will make day to day balance related decisions, even before their career officially begins. Topics can include information related to having open and honest conversations with students on balance related issues, as well as effective time/emotional management.

Furthermore, effective supervisor/supervisee relationships can provide additional support necessary to assist practitioners in the process of defining boundaries. Supervisory training should include, and emphasize, counseling techniques by which supervisees feel comfortable not only expressing their work/family balance related concerns, but also requesting additional time off if necessary. Supervisors must understand the emergent nature of work/family balance, and understand that life changes (including changes in marital/parental status) may result in a significant shift in how the individual practitioner prioritizes his time.

A significant cultural shift is likely impossible for the field of student affairs—evening and weekend work will more than likely always be a part of the profession. However, individual organizations can, and should evaluate processes

that either hinder or encourage individual practitioners to have some level of control over their day to day schedule. Departments and practitioners alike should encourage conversations between students and their advisors/administrators in which balance related issues are discussed. These conversations could serve the purpose of assisting students in creating realistic expectations of their administrators, and also encouraging balance as an area of student development.

Moreover, considering the emotional consequences of role conflict/overlap, significant attention must be paid towards practitioner mental health. The field is losing a number of promising young employees to burnout, and a high level of work related frustration. On site counseling, proactive training for both supervisors and practitioners, and emphasis on physical and mental wellness can contribute significantly to assisting individuals in their efforts to cope with work/family related issues.

Lastly, student affairs organizations must move away from “one size fits all” practices and policies towards balance. One of the fundamental issues brought up by the practitioners interviewed for this dissertation related to the concept of control. The men understood that long hours were a part of the profession, however, they expressed that a lack of control was a key driver in their level of frustration. To that end, work/family balance related policies and practices should be flexible in nature, and should offer practitioners a variety of options by which they can exercise some level of control over their schedules, within the parameters set by the department/supporting division. Doing so will provide practitioners with

the flexibility they may need to make decisions based on their own unique, individual circumstances.

Relationship of Results to Theory

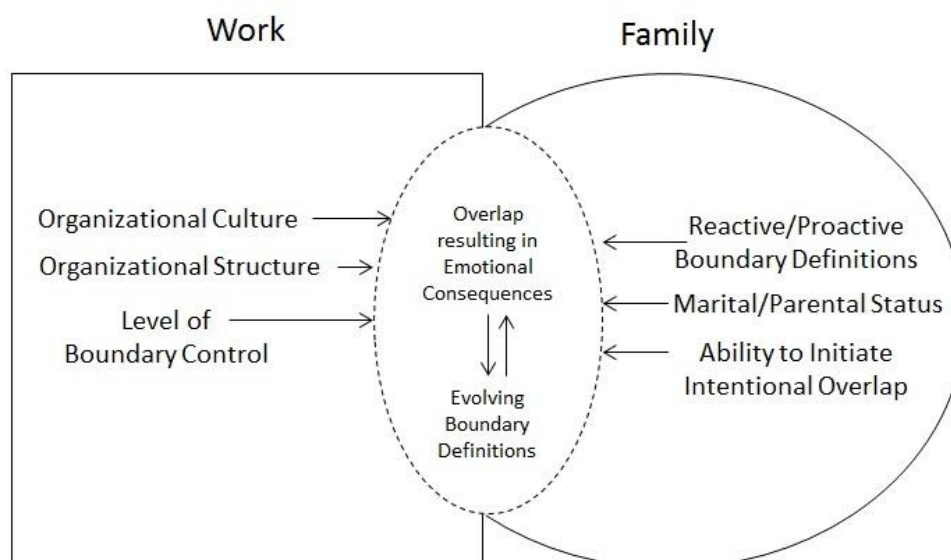
Clark's (2000) Work/Family Border theory indicates that individuals perceive work and family as two separate, intertwined domains. The two domains influence each other, require communication and interaction styles to be tailored differently, and also require transitions between the two domains. For some the transition is slight, for others it is more severe. In essence Clark posits that balance can be defined as the process of negotiating and dealing with boundary crossing and overlap on a day to day basis.

The findings from this study align well with Clark's notions in that the individuals interviewed were all going through the day to day process of navigating through their personally defined boundaries between work and home, and dealing with the consequences that arise from the times where they unsuccessfully had to deal with issues of overlap. Clark specifically indicates the process of creating a level of desired balance is based on the extent to which individuals have the ability to shape and control the domains/boundaries between work and home. This aligns well with the concepts discussed in this dissertation. The men who were unable to do so, felt a higher level of role stress associated with their positions, and those with the ability, and supervisory support, to control their boundaries felt less stress.

Lastly, Clark focuses on the concept of “role conflict” where individuals feel tension between the variety of roles they play in life on a day to day basis. This aligns well with the content analyzed for this dissertation, in that many of the individuals interviewed discussed the tension between their desire to be a good employee/student affairs practitioner, and their desire to maintain positive healthy relationships at home with their spouses/partners and children. The concept of role conflict is not bound or defined by temporal constraints. Rather it is one with emotional consequences, which also aligns with the consequences of role overlap described by the men interviewed.

Clark’s model provides an illustration of the understanding that work/home are two interconnected domains. Using the conclusions derived from this dissertation, Figure 3 provides specifics as to the parameters by which men in student affairs define and navigate the boundaries between the two:

Figure 3: Boundary Pressures for Men in Student Affairs



Summary and Conclusion

The intent of this dissertation is to further shed light on how individuals think and reason through the day to day pressures they face, both from the domains of work and home. The research is significant, in that it provides qualitatively generated data both from a male perspective, and from the perspective of practitioners in student affairs (both of which have been identified as needing additional data regarding this topic).

What resulted from this research process was information regarding a new, emergent, constantly evolving definition of work/family balance for men in student affairs, bound by the individuals' status in life and relationships with family, spouses/partners, and children. The concept of borders between work and home are constantly evolving, and are not able to be defined in a unilateral or monolithic fashion, rather they are individualized as the people experiencing them. Instead of focusing solely on the end result of individual definitions of boundaries between work and home, practitioners and researchers alike should focus on the process by which the definition is created.

The study also showed that organizational constructs, both formal and informal, can play a significant role in how well individuals are able to achieve a level of balance between their home and work domain. Organizational policies

implemented with the best of intentions can prove to be defeating to practitioners from an emotional and mental perspective. The lack of ability to control, or even influence the environment around them was proven over and over again to be a significant contributor to individuals lacking balance and feeling significant stress between their home and work domains.

Just as the definition of work/family balance is constantly evolving, so should the body of literature surrounding the subject. Technology, telecommuting, and other non-traditional work structures, coupled with traditional gender roles shifting significantly mean that men and women both face new and unique challenges associated with their day to day work. These challenges can create unique tensions, which in turn could result in organizations performing at lower levels than they would have otherwise. Simply put, I hope this dissertation contributed to the overall body of knowledge regarding work/family balance from an HRD perspective, but also I hope this dissertation provides future areas of research so that additional work can be done improve individuals, organizations, and the relationships between.

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Interest

Howdy potential subjects!

My name is Shailen Singh, and I'm currently a doctoral student studying Human Resource Development at Texas A&M University. My dissertation topic is focused on the concept of workplace/family balance, specifically for male student affairs practitioners.

The guiding theory for this study is Clark's (2001) "Work/Family Border Theory". Clark posits that we are all border crossers, who navigate between work and home on a regular basis. Rather than looking at the two areas (work and home) as being separate, she looks at them from a combined perspective and indicates that the barriers between the two are fluid in nature.

I chose male student affairs practitioners due to a variety of reasons. Several authors have indicated that balance is a key element in productive and satisfied student affairs employees. Furthermore, many other authors have indicated that balance is elusive due to the time intensive nature of these roles. Additionally there is a fairly significant gap in the literature regarding the male perspective on work/family balance. To that end, I decided to study this concept using case study methods.

I'm looking for 6-8 participants to go through this research study. Requirements would be a 60-90 minute interview, and the ability to collect specific documents (job descriptions, performance evaluations, etc) to gain a good

perspective on what expectations you as an employee face, and how they correlate with your own experiences in the workplace. All information will be kept confident, pseudonyms will be used, and you as a research subject will be given the opportunity to review transcripts before the dissertation is submitted for review.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please feel free to contact me via email at shailensingh@tamu.edu. I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Shailen Singh

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form
CONSENT FORM
Balance for Male Student Affairs Practitioners

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying issue of workplace family balance in male student affairs practitioners. The purpose of this study is to review the concept of work/family balance from a theoretical perspective to gain a deeper understanding of how male student affairs practitioners define, and navigate through the boundaries between work and home. . You were selected to be a possible participant by referral as someone who can contribute positively to the study.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed by the primary auditor and asked for suggestions on other participants. Furthermore, the primary auditor will request specific documents for further information specifically an organizational chart for your place of employment, and any job descriptions provided to you prior to taking your current position. Interviews will vary in length.

Your participation will be audio recorded.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, your participation will assist in producing a quality academic work assisting in providing a deeper understanding of the concept of balance in student affairs.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential and The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the primary auditor (Shailen Singh) will have access to the records.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only Shailen Singh will have access to the recordings. Any recordings will be kept for 2 years and then erased.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Shailen Singh via email at shailensingh@tamu.edu, or 979-862-8489.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Signature

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

APPENDIX C

Information Sheet

Information Sheet Balance for Male Student Affairs Practitioners

Introduction

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Participation

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. If you would like to be in the study, please feel free to contact Shailen Singh, primary investigator, at shailensingh@tamu.edu or via phone at 979.862.8489

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol

Level 1 Questions

- 1) Please describe your current position?
- 2) How many years have you been in this role? In student affairs as a whole?
- 3) What is your current marital status?
- 4) Do you have any children?

Level 2 Questions

- 1) How do you define the boundaries between home and work? How do you navigate between those boundaries?
- 2) Tell me how you balance your responsibilities between your home life and work life?
- 3) What challenges, if any, do you currently face in balancing those responsibilities?
- 4) Has your mindset shifted over the course of your career?
- 5) How does technology play a role in your ability to balance your time?
- 6) What's the line between good stress and bad stress for you? Can you share a time where you knew you were overwhelmed?
- 7) Does the culture of your office help you or hinder you from being able to achieve balance?
- 8) Did you have any role models for balance?
- 9) What's your relationship with your supervisor like? Does he/she support you in your personal goals?
- 10) How would you characterize your current work schedule? How many hours a week do you currently work?
- 11) Does your job description accurately describe what you do on a daily basis? If not, what additional responsibilities have you assumed and why?
- 12) Is there ever any overlap between the two? If so, what are some reasons why the two fields overlap?
- 13) If there is overlap between the two domains, how did that make you feel?
- 14) Is overlap a common event? How often does it occur?
- 15) How satisfied are you with the current level of balance you've struck between your home and work life?
- 16) Has your home life ever been negatively affected by your work life? Vice versa? Please explain why

17) Can you share with us any stories about how you've positively or negatively dealt with work/life balance or overlap?

VITA

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